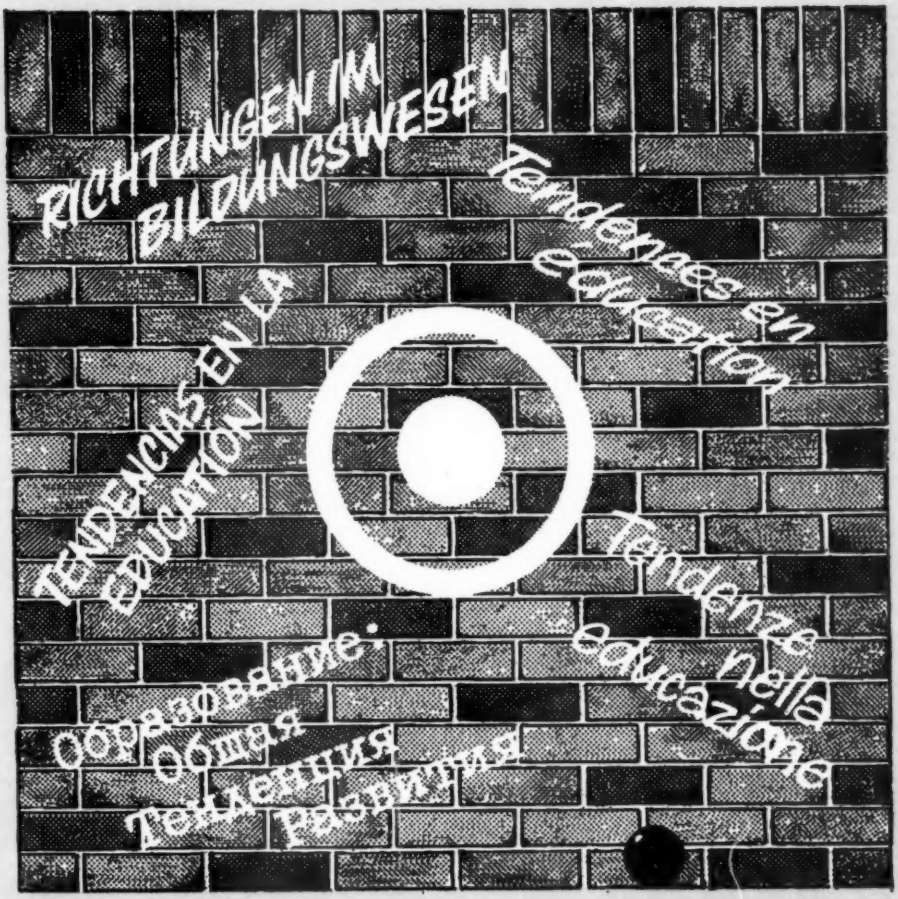
Trends in Education



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LEARNING A LANGUAGE

The New Teacher in the Primary School

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Epilepsy

Business Studies

LEAs and Continuity

Support Services in the USA and Canada

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MARCH 1976

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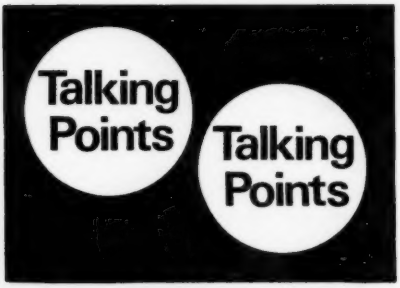

Language is linear

Two of the articles in this issue of TRENDS deal with the teaching of foreign languages. Teaching languages raises a set of problems which many people now seem reluctant to face. In TRENDS 1975/2, one of them was forcibly outlined by Dr Harry Judge: 'It may very well be true, to take one current and difficult example, that standards in French in some, or even in many, schools are falling. When a relatively small and traditional teaching force applied virtually the whole of its energies to instructing the most able 20 per cent of the population, the students so favoured might have been expected to achieve high standards, and they did. But what kind of calculation would illuminate questions about standards in teaching French now?'

The thoughts of those who teach classical and modern languages today repeatedly return to this question. Professor Hawkins notes that fewer of the most able are achieving examination success and that the numbers of modern language entrants for both O- and A-level examinations are falling. Other observers believe that the top 20 per cent of pupils who constitute our traditional language learners are today achieving less than their potential. There are significantly more places available for modern languages in universities than there are suitable candidates to fill them. Mr Williams ruefully concludes that this country produces 'only a small number of competent linguists and that efforts to give substantial numbers worthwhile knowledge of a foreign language have met with little success'. Both articles press the point that a reinterpretation of what is worthwhile has to take place and that objectives must be broadened and diversified. Indeed, many new social and cultural elements have been introduced into school language courses and also, indeed, into courses on classical languages and ancient civilizations.

The questions that demand answers are not so much about a pupil's age, or whether he is in a selective or non-selective school, or a streamed or non-streamed class, but about the suitable targets to set him and the means of helping him to attain them. No doubt many factors contribute to a pupil's attainment in foreign language learning, but a practising teacher is always aware that some have a greater capacity to learn than others. Only when different objectives reflect the real differences between pupils will the expansion of modern language teaching justify itself.

The debate about languages in the curriculum is often presented in terms of conflict between idealistic aspiration and empirical reality. Realism insists upon a social need to combat illiteracy and to produce high levels of linguistic skill. Should all children learn French? At what age? In what type of school? These questions are not, in relation to this issue, of vast importance. But if illiteracy is not being contained and if the absolute numbers taking foreign languages in our school-leaving examinations continue to fall, then there is something seriously wrong. How can it be put right?

When James D. Conant investigated, somewhat in the manner of Gulliver, the state of the American High School in the late 1950s, he wrote in his famous report: 'Almost without exception, I found a deplorable state of affairs in regard to foreign languages. Too many students with limited ability were studying a foreign language for

two years; too few able students were studying one language long enough'. Had Conant been observing English secondary schools at that time, he might have concluded that with us too few pupils were studying any foreign language at all. However, communication between teachers and pupils has become freer of recent years and so potentially more fruitful. This helps teachers to be aware of individual differences, but at the same time many have become more anxious about an equal distribution of the effort and resources devoted to teaching. There may as a result be circumstances in which abler pupils suffer by comparison with the past. If this is so, the facts should not be hidden because no one in education would deliberately want any child's interests to be neglected.

Time and the continuity appropriate to such a challenging objective as language learning are one essential need but without finding satisfaction in intellectual discipline, without patience and a prodigal expenditure of intellectual energy, the learner of a language has little prospect of real progress. Only when such qualities are seen to be valued in school or college, or indeed in society as a whole, will the conditions of success be present. Words are difficult things to bring under control and no profit comes from pretending otherwise.

Breaking Clio's head

Just before the end of last year, in time for Christmas, the Assistant Masters Association published the fourth edition of their handbook, *The Teaching of History in Secondary Schools.* It is an immensely stimulating work, full of good sound commonsense, and no one who cares to call himself (or herself) a teacher of history should go much longer without reading it. Yet over one fundamental the authors are curiously defensive. Why teach history? Because, they answer:

> . . . the study of history by the young, through whatever methods, new or old, has benefited the pupil as much as that of any other accepted 'subject'. The wise teacher of history would claim no more, and certainly no less, for his own special study.

Gentlemen, if you will allow me to coin a phrase, bunk. This is to protest too little.

No one except village idiots and the very young would claim any longer that we actually *learn* from history. The old idea that we could was largely based on the pious hope that we could utilize our knowledge of the past to influence the course of the future — much along the lines of 'Go and find out what little Johnny is doing, and stop him'. Those of us who accept a more deterministic view of history — the view that we are in the inexorable grip of powerful and enigmatic forces — can at least derive some comfort from the thought that at any rate we are spared the necessity of choice.

Why then should we teach history? Perhaps it would be better to frame the question another way. What would be the consequences of not teaching history? Arthur Marwick, in his book *The Nature of History,* makes the point rather well:

> To those who pose the question, 'What is the use of history?', the crispest and most enlightening reply is to suggest that they try to imagine what everyday life would be like in a society in which no one knew any history. Imagination boggles, because it is only through knowledge of its history that a society can have knowledge of itself. As a man without memory and self-knowledge is a man adrift, so a society without memory (or more correctly, without recollection) and self-knowledge would be a society adrift. Leaving aside the notion of the collective subconscious, human society, unlike the individual, has no organic memory; so every society must have some functionary, whether priest, bard, or Keeper of the Public Records, responsible for preserving and communicating such knowledge.

The preservation and the communication of such knowledge is the history teacher's function also. That is why we learn history and that is why we teach it.

Modern language study for the serious linguist

ERIC HAWKINS
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CSE and GCE examination results clearly show that girls tend to be better linguists than boys and that this disparity is increasing. Are girls better linguists because they are better motivated? Is language learning tending to become a middle class preoccupation? In this article, Professor Hawkins discusses these and other issues and suggests ways in which teachers can help serious linguists to succeed in learning the language of their choice.

The 'serious linguist' might be defined as the pupil with sufficiently serious an interest in learning a language to stand up to be tested, from the 16-year-old who aims in the first instance at CSE Grade 1, up to the very highest flyer at 18 plus in school. Before discussing teaching methods we should try to answer three questions about these serious linguists:

Why are they mostly girls and middle class?
What are they aiming at?
What distinctive contribution can modern language study make in their school curriculum?

Why so many girls and why a class bias?

Not only do girls predominate in this category — but the disparity between girls and boys increases year by year as the table below indicates:

	CSE 1972 Entries	Passes at Grade 1
French		
Boys	29,984	3,118
Girls	41,864	7,883
German		
Boys	4,079	511
Girls	5,630	1,147
	GCE O-level 1972	
	Entries	**Passes**
French		
Boys	66,500	36,691
Girls	78,364	51,140
German		
Boys	16,020	9,059
Girls	20,511	13,251
All Modern Languages		
Boys	92,469	51,676
Girls	114,268	74,575

Source: The Statistics of Education (DES)

Only in Russian (O-level GCE) did more boys (1,586) enter than girls (1,551) but even here more girls passed (1,084) than boys (1,021).

The disparity between girls and boys has increased over the past decade as the following figures show:

Passes in GCE O-level

Girls	(1975)	49,936
	(1972)	51,140
	an increase of 1,204	
Boys	(1965)	45,060
	(1972)	36,691
	a decrease of 8,369	

The A-level figures show an even clearer picture:

GCE A-level 1972

French	Entries	Passes
Boys	8,943	5,801
Girls	15,982	11,592
German		
Boys	2,835	2,111
Girls	4,565	3,555

All modern languages	Entries	Passes
Boys	13,834	9,448
Girls	23,551	17,530

Since 1965, the number of boys passing at A-level in French has declined from 7,567 to 5,801 (decrease of 1,766), while the number of girls passing has risen from 10,508 to 11,592 (an increase of 1,084). The decrease in the boys' figure is not reflected in a general decrease in total passes at A-level. The number of boys passing at A-level in all subjects increased from 164,739 in 1965 to 190,492 in 1972. (The increase in the number of girls passing was, of course, proportionately greater — from 90,049 in 1965 to 134,511 in 1972.)

One explanation that has been offered for these figures is that girls more often experience early success in language work (perhaps owing to earlier maturing of their verbal ability). Clare Burstall's research seems to show that experience of early success and satisfaction are crucial for motivation. Why do more boys not experience this early success? There is some evidence that when boys are taught in segregated groups they make more progress and drop-out seems less of a problem. We need more research in this area.

Clare Burstall has also shown that there is 'a linear relationship between test score (in French at primary level) and parental occupation: for both boys and girls in each school group high

mean scores coincide with high status parental occupation and low mean scores with low status occupation'.* This is a complex and, for the language teacher, a most disturbing phenomenon if it leads, as it seems to do, to a drift away from language study at secondary level of pupils from 'low status' parental occupation backgrounds. The class bias is intensified as soon as study visits abroad or exchanges become part of the programme. 'High status' occupation families set store by language learning and this home interest undoubtedly feeds back to school in interest and motivation. Such families also take foreign travel in their stride. (Of course, language learning is not the only area in which there is a class bias, but it is one in which such bias is very marked.)

My chief hope in prefacing this discussion with these facts and figures is that teachers privileged to teach 'serious linguists' will continually ask themselves: 'Am I doing all I could to attract the able boys as well as the able girls, and the children from working-class homes, as well as the children of the middle class?'

Probably the most challenging single development in modern language teaching in the past decade has been the expansion from under one-third to about two-thirds of the proportion of the 11 plus age group studying a foreign language. There is still a long way to go. The drop-out in the middle years is tragically high. Modern linguists faced with a curriculum in which pupils' choice of a key subject is determined by social class will continue to search for ways of keeping curriculum doors open to children well beyond 11 plus, regardless of the hazard of family background. Nevertheless the 'serious linguists' who presently opt for language study also deserve the best we can give them. There are two more questions to answer about them.

What are they aiming at?

Very few of them, if they are wisely counselled, will aim to make their career as 'linguists' or, as Nelson Brooks preferred to say 'languists' — his word for one who has mastered a foreign language — as distinct from one who studies 'linguistics'). *Working Paper 28*† made the point that for most sixth formers, the language studied at A-level is 'ancillary' to their main 'career' subject. The point has recently been emphasized by the investigation at York,‡ which showed that employers are little interested in 'languists' as such — but only in specialists (in secretarial skills, engineering, law, accountancy, for example), who possess a language in addition to their marketable skills. Ability to read a balance

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* *French in the Primary School.* Appendix Two. Slough: NFER, 1970.

† *New Patterns in Sixth Form Modern Language Studies,* Working Paper 28. London: Schools Council/Evans Methuen Educational, 1970.

‡ Emmans, K., Hawkins, E. and Westoby, A. *Foreign Languages in Industry and Commerce.* Language Teaching Centre, University of York, 1974.

sheet, knowledge of company law and such skills and concepts come first, and take long training to acquire. Without them the language in which the concepts are expressed can mean little to the uninitiated. Most of our 'serious linguists', therefore, will be wise to train primarily as 'specialists' in some other field than languages. This means that we must consider modern language study as a part of their wider education, as a contribution to personal development, which leads to our third question.

What distinctive contribution can foreign language study make within the curriculum?

Working Paper 28 put the matter succinctly: 'The teacher wants his pupils to develop, through their emotional and intellectual experience, into something more than merely clever operators. For this to be possible, however, it is important that the questions raised and the judgements discussed in modern language studies shall be such that pupils can exercise their critical faculties and not merely their imitative gifts or their memory. This implies that the pupils must themselves care about the questions raised, and that the answers to the questions raised shall be verifiable within the pupil's own experience. The question "Is it true?" cannot be answered in this way if the pupil is operating in an area far removed from his own personal experience, or from anything he has already studied, or is currently studying, in his own language'.

How does an able pupil from a parochial, or bigoted, or limited home background — no matter how sincere or loving — manage to breathe a different air, make challenging comparisons, break free from constricting stereotypes, better than through the exploration of a challenging foreign culture? Many an insecure working class pupil with an aptitude for language has, through modern language study, found new freedom hitherto denied to him by his own background and society. The lessons for education in any community torn by rival bigotries seem obvious. But the challenge to language teachers to present their discipline in ways that serve such a worthwhile purpose is full of difficulty.

How should we try to teach the 'serious linguist'?

Reading. Once the pupil comes within sight of O-level, reading must surely be all important. There is no other way for the learner to acquire familiarity with the 'company that words keep' (arbitrary and unpredictable as it is). Only by wide reading can the able pupil correct the conclusions arrived at by his precious (inherited) faculty for 'creation by analogy'. This is what distinguishes the quick language learner most clearly from his less able classmate who lacks the necessary, effortless, immediate perception of the 'pattern' in the new material he meets. But 'creation by analogy' which is lacking in the slow learner is still

not enough in language work. Words must be met in the arbitrary shape and company they assume, and met often. Only by reading can the 'creation by analogy' process be corrected and shaped; and only through reading can the foreign culture be explored in any depth. The question is how can reading be stimulated in the fourth and fifth years, and what sort of reading?

One answer that might be worth exploring further is the one suggested by the Joint Matriculation Board (JMB) experiment begun in 1964. An alternative O-level paper was then accepted by the JMB in which pupils themselves selected and read two or three books (from a long list of 150 titles proposed by teachers and circulated by the Examining Board). The books selected were taken into the oral examination by the pupil and (after reading aloud a passage of his choice) the pupil talked about one or more of the books informally with the examiner (without any attempt to play the literary critic). The idea was to give credit at O-level for reading initiative shown.

Reading in the sixth form was a main topic of *Working Paper 28* and I would make the following three suggestions, all in the spirit of that Working Paper.

First, if reading in the foreign language is to make its full contribution, it should not be confined to works of fiction, drama or poetry, and the main purpose should not be to develop the skills of literary criticism. This, at the sixth form level, with the dictionary being consulted at every line, would be to invite pretentiousness and (as A-level literature papers have tended to do) would develop into a training in hypocrisy. *Working Paper 28* argues for the value of reading a wide range of non-fiction, including even ephemeral journalism. In French, for instance, this might include regular reading and discussion in sixth forms of '*A Travers la Presse*, or of a good widely ranging family magazine such as '*La Vie Catholique*'.

Second, pupils specializing at A-level in, say, history, or geography, or music, or economics, may reasonably wish to pursue these interests in their reading in the foreign language. The bibliographies in *Working Paper 28* list suggestions designed to encourage this more adventurous, pupil-directed non-fiction reading, breaking away from the concept of the 'set-book' chosen by the examiner.

Third, if the great classics are to be attempted — and there will be a place for them for some pupils — care should be taken to match reading in the foreign language, where possible, with comparable works in the native language. Pairs of novels, for example a Dickens with a Galdos, could be studied jointly. Certainly the historical, social, musical, architectural or geographical background reading essential for understanding the great books must be properly researched, and examiners ought not to prescribe

works for special study until they are in a position to give details of such essential supporting reading, and specify where it can be found. Another way of breaking away from the arid dissection of great works with which sixth formers can make little first-hand contact would be to press publishers to produce adventurous and attractive anthologies like the extracts from English authors used by Scandinavian sixth formers studying English.

The foreign country as language laboratory. Equal in importance to reading must come contact with the living language in the true language laboratory— the foreign country. There have been some enterprising experiments in getting 'serious linguists' into real learning situations abroad. If they can be followed up they will make the unimaginative 'school trip' (still far too common) an unregretted memory.

Intensive courses. Next among important developments in 'learning strategies' must come 'intensive courses'. The short intensive courses in which, for instance, university student beginners have reached O-level standard in Italian or German in two weeks from scratch are now fairly well-known, and their implications deserve careful study (though not the irresponsible conclusions sometimes drawn from them). More interesting in the present context have been the short intensive *'Bains de langage'* for school pupils, pioneered in LEAs like Hertfordshire and Somerset. These often take the form of long weekends in suitably equipped resource centres which, by careful planning, can be good, economical substitutes for the foreign country for short periods.

The extension to sixth forms of the (now) fairly well tried 'reciprocal' technique of in-service training for teachers is full of promise. In the reciprocal intensive courses at York, equally matched groups of French and English teachers teach each other their native language in pairs on alternate days. Matched groups of sixth formers have been found to respond well to a similar pattern of work. A development that will still further enhance the value of most intensive sixth form 'stages' is the close involvement of language students in training in colleges and departments of education (as, for instance, in the Goole Grammar School experiments). The involvement of such graduate students transforms the pupil/staff ratio and allows a rich variety of intensive language ploys to be worked out.

Another example of the value of graduate student participation in short intensive schools courses is provided by the annual three-day sessions of Russian for sixth form beginners from all the schools in a city, with follow-up 'booster' weekends during the year. But, of course, the most ambitious and difficult — but rewarding — of such experiments for the 'serious linguist' is the *'section bilingue'* in which a group of pupils opts to study one or more of its O-level subjects (commonly geography) in the

foreign language and also to be tested wholly, or partly, in that language. Mill Hill school* is the pioneer here though the experiments more recently begun in maintained state schools will be watched with interest.

As a background to all such intensive work there is the ever-present need for resources. Here the Centre for Information on Language Teaching (CILT) has been a pioneer while teachers in some LEA's, notably Leicestershire, are fortunate in the imaginative resources available there.

Use of the tape recorder. For the 'serious linguist' the invention of the tape recorder has brought a potential which we have been slow to realize — possibly because we were mesmerized by the (expensive) so-called 'language laboratory'. This by itself did not solve any of our problems. The real thinking about use of recorded tape is only just beginning. This is a theme for a separate article. Here there is space only to list some of the possible uses of the tape recorder for the 'serious school linguist':

listening to comprehension exercises in all their variety, encouraged by recent changes in GCE at A-level;† the exercise called 'internal translation';‡ learning by heart, by modelling one's repetition on a native-speaking version (learning passages of excellent prose, or verse, as well as proverbs and idioms, which can then be exploited in capping, or commenting on, anecdotes listened to in a comprehension session); completing 'gapped scripts' while listening to a tape recording e.g. of verse recorded by the 'assistant', or of a tuneful pop song — the gaps in the script being designed to focus attention on a particular linguistic problem; listening to spoken passages while following with a script and detecting 'error' or departures from the text; role playing — where a group of sixth formers sitting round the tape recorder hears a short dialogue spoken once or twice. After the second hearing the teacher plays the tape again but turns down the volume, or stops the tape each time one of the two speakers begins to speak. As he does so he points to a member of the group — who has to play the role of the suppressed voice. (The model answer can then be listened to or not as preferred.) The group is kept on its toes — while constant imitation of the native intonation ensures high standards of pronunciation; commentary on a short series of slides. The slides are shown twice — on the second showing there is a spoken

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* A film describing the Mill Hill experiment will shortly be available for hire by teachers who are interested, from the Language Teaching Centre, University of York.

† A catalogue of tapes and scripts suitable for sixth form comprehension work and available to schools is obtainable from the Language Teaching Centre, University of York.

‡ cf. *Working Paper 28.* Appendix F, pp. 77. op. cit.

commentary without preparation — first by a sixth former, then on the tape recorder by the assistant, or the teacher, then by a second sixth former after attention has been drawn to the linguistic points in the model commentary; finally the weekly, short, disciplined session of 'education' of the ear, or 'phonétique corrective' which counteracts the 'erosion' of even the best accent by the constant interference of English.

Two controversial suggestions

There are two more aspects of the job of educating the 'serious linguist' which I think will be considered to be more controversial. The first is the introduction of the study of 'language', studied as an aspect of human behaviour, as the central element in the secondary curriculum. It could form a link between modern language study and study of the mother tongue. For the 'serious linguist' a curriculum lacking in such a study seems more and more obviously deficient.*

The second new element for which I would plead is the challenge to conceive of the school community as a place where each individual can learn while making a tangible contribution to helping others to learn. This would mean a move away from the concept of schooling as 'getting' an education for oneself towards a concept of 'sharing' and would imply, for instance, that sixth form linguists would, under a teacher's guidance, act as 'teachers' aides' or group leaders with junior forms as a normal, compulsory part of their timetable, because they are seen, and see themselves, not only as learners but as valued teachers too. Where this has been tried it has transformed group work in French and German. Why only in academic subjects do we not allow our sixth formers to be teachers, within their scope, while learning?†

The teacher of the 'serious linguist'

Finally, a word about the responsibility of teaching the 'serious linguist'. The programme we have outlined places on the teacher an obligation to keep his standards very high, continually deepening his own reading, maintaining the standard of his spoken language, and his knowledge of the foreign country. How can the teacher do this? The present climate must seem very discouraging to many teachers. Eventually we shall enjoy the regular five-yearly sabbatical term forecast in the James Report (and for which language teachers have always had a greater claim than any others because of their unique need to maintain contact with their 'laboratory'). Until that happy day — for which the pressure must

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* The argument is developed in *The Space Between*, Centre for Information on Language Teaching, Paper 10.

† For an account of successful experiment on these lines see the article by R. J. Roper of Shenfield School, Essex, in the *Times Educational Supplement*, 21 March 1975.

be kept up relentlessly if it is to come — there are some things we can do.

First, the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges will supply details of exciting possibilities for teacher study visits and post-to-post exchanges, now somewhat more generously supported by the DES than ever before. We must keep up the pressure on LEAs not to capitulate to pressure to cut down on this essential in-service work.

Secondly, the 'reciprocal course' technique of in-service training is firmly established (a DES German/English reciprocal course begins at Nottingham/York in July 1976 alongside the annual DES French/English reciprocal course). If the demand grows, more places on such courses will undoubtedly be provided.*

Thirdly, perhaps less spectacular, but in the long term potentially most useful, is the documentation exchange link with a teacher abroad working in an establishment similar to his own and facing similar problems. With such a link established and with mutual confidence born of prompt reaction to requests, a wealth of cuttings, records, maps, pictures, and tapes can be exchanged on specific themes to ensure authenticity and freshness in the language work in both schools.

Finally, for the teacher as for the pupil, reading is the key, and I end as I began by emphasizing its importance. A useful way of keeping up to date with reading is to agree with one's linked colleague abroad to send each other one recently acclaimed book every school term for the departmental library. Another method is to write annually to a good university bookshop in a French town asking for a list of books of importance that have attracted interesting reviews.

It is a rare privilege to teach the 'serious linguist' in school but the challenges are formidable. LEA austerity threatens the hard-won progress recently made in getting financial support for in-service training. Comprehensive reorganization fails to correct the class bias in the language curriculum. There is no shortage of challenges to our 'stickability' and to our enthusiasm for our subject—of which our pupils, the 'serious linguists', fortunately give us every day such encouraging examples.

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* For details see the DES annual list of in-service courses.

Problems in language learning

R. C. WILLIAMS

R. C. Williams is an HM Staff Inspector at the DES with special responsibility for European relations

The English have always been reluctant to learn a foreign language, and the drop-out rate of those who do embark on the exercise is high. What kind of problems are involved in language teaching in schools today? What can be done to make language learning a more effective and enjoyable experience?

The belief dies hard for the English that it is not really necessary for them to be proficient in languages other than their own. Greater ease of travel, including the package tour, has done nothing to shake this belief. Millions of people have discovered that they can happily survive in other parts of the world without needing to use any language but English. People of many other nationalities seem only too ready to learn enough English to deal with the Englishman either at home or abroad. The fact that English is the most widely spoken language, at any rate in the 'free' world, makes those who are not 'native speakers' all the more anxious to learn it, and it is almost certainly the major 'second' language in most countries.

A large majority of people would concede, however, that there are certain advantages to be gained from some knowledge of a foreign language. It is not easy for the native speaker of English to become sufficiently motivated, nor is it easy for him to choose among the other major languages of Europe let alone the rest of the world. So far, our efforts in this country to give a really large number of people a worthwhile knowledge of at least one major foreign language have met with little success, and it is still a matter for some surprise when an English man or woman who is not a specialist linguist shows more than very modest ability in another language. The level of the demands of the public examination system in our schools, and even beyond, still does not sufficiently promote the skills which are needed in real situations without substantial time being spent abroad. And in this country motivation to learn a foreign language remains low for reasons which are less convincing than they may have been a hundred years ago.

Learning a language away from the country in which it is spoken can be a slow, even tedious business. Good teaching and learning facilities plus the inestimable stimulus of living abroad in a situation of total immersion are essential if swift progress is

to be made. Experience suggests that the traditional approach to language learning in this country produces only a small number of competent linguists and even these need constant practice if their skills are to be maintained. But it is often difficult and time-consuming to practise these skills particularly away from the country where the language is spoken. Though there are no signs that the use of English as an international *'lingua franca'* is diminishing, we should still cultivate a knowledge of the major languages at least of Western Europe and should attempt to develop some kind of language learning strategy so that our community and its organizations might possess a reasonable number of people competent in these languages.

Negative attitudes

For most people, attitudes towards language learning are acquired at school and nowadays possibly at primary school. Far too often these attitudes are negative and lead to minimal achievement. After an initial period of enthusiasm, disillusion sets in as the going appears to become difficult. No sooner is one hurdle surmounted than another appears and the effort required does not appear to be rewarded by the achievement. It is all too easy for a reasonably intelligent person to monitor his own progress in learning a language and even without justification to be disappointed by his observations. His level of reading comprehension may be low for a very long period, the native speaker may seem to go much too swiftly, participation in a conversation may be impossible, and writing exposes him to errors of spelling, grammar, idiom and syntax which may render his efforts all but incomprehensible to the native reader.

It is possible, however, that traditionally we have set our standards too high and that the best has become the enemy of the good. Bilingualism in the full sense is very rare and varying degrees of fluency depending upon motivation, opportunity and practice are as much as most people can hope to attain. A good accent is fairly rare, good intonation is even harder to achieve and unless there are ample opportunities for practice, only a very sketchy knowledge of a foreign language, certainly in terms of aural comprehension, speech and writing, will be the achievement of most people. Attempting to learn a language away from the country in which it is spoken requires motivation, a good memory and a good ear. It is not an intellectual exercise but it does require discipline and effort.

As the opportunity of learning a foreign language is offered to a widening range of pupils in our schools and colleges it becomes clear that different strategies of language teaching have to be adopted and that varied expectations are essential. A very large number of people are more likely to achieve a measure of success in the receptive skills of aural comprehension and reading than in

the productive skills of speech and, particularly, writing. Therefore it seems reasonable to lay greater stress on the former though the latter will also need to be practised as part of the teaching and learning process.

This is possibly not the place to discuss other important activities associated with language learning, such as the study of literature or civilization, except to note that only a small number of people will be interested in the former and that although the latter will certainly interest the good linguist, non-linguistic courses under the generic and often misleading title of European Studies are frequently offered only as a non-linguistic sop to 14 and 15 year-olds who are deemed to have failed in the study of a foreign language. These courses are often too ambitiously designed and may even fail to attract the support of the historians and geographers who could make a valuable contribution to their success. Indeed, if it were possible or even permissible to identify those children who would be likely to abandon the study of a foreign language at the first opportunity, it might be worth starting them off at the age of 11 on a non-linguistic course about another country in Europe and leading them towards the study of language (and civilization) during the last two or three years of compulsory schooling. This approach might lessen the hostility towards language learning and the sense of failure on the part of many perfectly reasonable young people. It is unlikely to happen, however, because of the concept of equality of opportunity, which in so many cases where language learning is concerned is, regrettably, opportunity to fail.

There is little doubt of the urgent need for language courses geared to the particular needs of non-specialists and based on what they need to know rather than on the traditional progression. Many years ago TAVOR was an attempt to provide such a course Unfortunately its misuse in many places in this country as an introduction to a traditional French course led to its abandonment. If it had been used in other ways it might have been more successful.

Which language?

When assessing linguistic needs and achievements it is important also to look at the various languages which are generally taught in this country. French, of course, continues to dominate the scene statistically, followed at a great distance by German, with Spanish a bad third, and with Italian and Russian well in the background. Doubts are sometimes expressed as to whether this is the most desirable balance of provision but little is done to adjust it. French is the predominant language for traditional, historical, and geographical reasons, while German is held traditionally to be 'difficult' but useful for scientists. Spanish and Italian are deemed, usually by hearsay, to be 'easy' with a certain 'commercial' usefulness allowed to Spanish. Russian, which showed

promising signs of establishing itself in the days of National Service and just afterwards, is held to be so difficult that it is rarely found in non-selective schools where languages other than French seldom flourish unless they are 'first' languages. Russian is therefore retreating into highly selective schools and the numbers of people studying it at sixth-form and university level are dropping steadily.

Leaving aside tradition and custom, it is difficult to justify the present situation in this country. From a purely educational point of view, it may not matter which language is used to give a child linguistic experience, but more utilitarian attitudes may raise some questions. Is French in fact the most suitable and necessary foreign language for our children to learn? Many of them, particularly boys, seem to find it very difficult and the pronunciation, accent, and intonation are so different from English as to make the language seem very odd to large numbers of them. When it comes to writing, the complexities of French spelling, so closely related to the grammar, are daunting to all but a few.

German probably presents fewer problems of pronunciation and intonation to English people and may be easier to spell, but it is an inflected language with three genders and a sentence structure that can become very complicated, though it need not be so in the initial stages. German is, however, associated in many people's minds with masculinity, efficiency, and economic success which may predispose them in its favour. Spanish and Italian have a deceptive reputation for being easy. This may have been true of their early stages in the days when the great majority of people who started to learn them had already had some success with French and Latin but it is doubtful whether they are significantly, if at all, easier than French as 'first' foreign languages. The fact that they are almost phonetic makes them flatter to deceive. From the point of view of comprehension and production, they pose ample problems and have their own peculiar difficulties. There is little doubt, however, that they deserve more attention than they receive.

Russian is clearly a special case. The alphabet poses immediate though not insuperable difficulties. The fact that it is a slavonic and not a Western European language embodying many linguistic concepts not present in the romance, English or German languages imposes considerable penalties on those who wish to learn it. Difficulty of access to Russia and the Russians is an additional obstacle but at the same time the importance of Russian needs no stressing.

Reorganization of language learning

To try to base reasons for learning given languages on their alleged ease or difficulty is, however, a sterile business, and it is more to the point to consider more practical, even utilitarian reasons. The French are our nearest neighbours and from the point of view

of culture, literature, philosophy, and elegance, there is everything to be said for French. In spite of the prominence given to it, however, only a small minority of people make really worthwhile progress and the possibly elitist virtues of French, mentioned above, as well as its apparent difficulties for so many people, almost suggest that it might be offered only to intellectually able people who had already had some success with another language. This is an extreme solution which would probably be impracticable and would in any case meet with considerable opposition, but there are sound reasons for considering changes in the organization of language learning in our schools and colleges which would make a wider range of languages available. Given the importance of Germany in economic, commercial and industrial affairs, an expansion of the teaching of German in this country would seem to be highly desirable. A similar expansion in the case of Spanish is equally desirable. Millions of British people go to Spain every year but few are able to speak or understand Spanish. If more were able to do so their holidays would surely increase in interest and give greater pleasure. Spain is also an important potential market in which a knowledge of the language could swiftly help to establish good relationships, and Latin America continues to offer tremendous possibilities.

In the great majority of our secondary schools the organization of the modern languages department follows individual and traditional school policy or resources. The first foreign language, usually French, is taken on entry by as many children as the school thinks capable of profiting, though the present shortage of teachers of French may limit the number. Very many children will abandon the study of French as soon as possible, often after only one or two years and well before the age of 14. A second foreign language, generally German but possibly Spanish, may be taken by those who are doing well in French, and this second language may be introduced whenever the individual school thinks fit. On the whole, the later its introduction the smaller the number of pupils who take it. In many schools, however, only French is taught and the opportunity to study another language is not available.

If the balance of language teaching is to be significantly altered in this country, it is initially the schools that have the most important part to play. In the recent past the introduction of French into the curriculum of many primary or middle schools has done nothing to foster the study of other languages in secondary schools. It is at this latter level that influential decisions can be taken by the individual heads and teachers who plan the curriculum and timetable of a particular school, especially since no agreed national policy on languages seems likely to emerge.

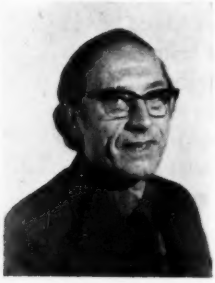
At present it is unusual for a school to offer a language other than French as its first modern foreign language. Other strategies are often possible but are either not considered or are rejected. In many schools it would be possible to offer two parallel first

languages (French or German) though this rarely happens in fact. An occasional school may offer alternating first languages and one quite good arrangement is for a large school to provide two parallel first languages with the possibility of the abler linguists taking one other second language at or near the time when options are introduced. It should not be too difficult for the secondary schools of a given area to examine their language teaching provision with a view to making adjustments which would produce a suitably balanced output. Local education authorities, their modern language advisers, and secondary heads could usefully consider this problem.

Over the last ten years there have been frequent references to the language revolution that has allegedly taken place in our schools. Certainly, more children than ever before start the study of a foreign language, usually French, but very large numbers are swift to abandon it before achieving anything significant; the waste of teaching resources must be considerable.

Large sums of money have been spent on audio-visual courses, film-strip projectors, tape recorders, and language laboratories, and there is said to be a much greater emphasis on speech and on aural comprehension. The revolution may be more apparent than real, however, and it is doubtful if it has produced more or better linguists. There may even be a movement back to the more formal teaching of languages. There is certainly a need for more effective approaches if languages are not to become a widely disliked part of the curriculum. They will never be a soft option and will continue to require application and diligence. It is also very important that we should look more critically at the balance of language learning in this country and attempt to come to some conclusion as to whether or not it might be profitable to do something other than continue with the relatively unchanged situation of the last 70 years or so.

The new teacher in the primary school



FRANK PLIMMER

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TRENDS 1975/4 contained a number of articles on the problems of the new teacher in the secondary school and offered some practical advice. Does the new primary school teacher experience any similar anxieties? How can we ensure that they are adequately prepared for the realities of the classroom?

Miss Susan Smith, aged 22, began her career as a primary teacher last September. The college of education where she spent the previous three years warmly recommended her as a result of her examination successes and her three good teaching practices in schools in the Surrey stockbroker belt. She is full of enthusiasm and energy and eager to try out a lot of the ideas she gained at college. How is she getting on in her new school?

To begin with she finds the children of this industrial town rather different from the children she got to know on school practice. Not that she knew them all that well after just three practices, especially as her only responsibility for the whole class was confined to four weeks of the last practice. These children have problems of poverty, poor home conditions, as well as race and health problems which are not prevalent in Surrey. Susan wants to help, but, not knowing how to begin, she feels vastly inadequate.

She has discovered that to plan a child's educational progress is vastly different from doing a few weeks of set-piece projects and well-planned expositions. There is no foreseeable end to her work as there was on school practice, and the apparent lack of progress of the less able and the more unfortunate is beginning to haunt her. She foresees them getting worse and worse and then being passed on to another teacher next year in all their ignorance.

Looking back, she cannot remember much from college to help her. They had courses on the psychology, philosophy, sociology, and history of education, but nothing from them springs to mind when she is dealing with Wayne who will not work but who employs his boundless energy to destroy the work of others; or with Lynn, who steals continually, is nearly always found out, and weeps inconsolably each time as though it were the first; or with Shastra, who may not for religious reasons change for PE, and whose Pakistani mum is totally incomprehensible when she harangues Susan each morning.

As for the curriculum, she finds that it is the small details of

everyday life which seems to baffle her. All those lectures on mathematical logic, and nobody said what you do with Michèle who solves every problem with contemptuous ease in thirty seconds flat and demands harder work all the time, or indeed with Michael whose only use for logic blocks is to drop them down the loo if he is not constantly observed.

How is she getting on with her headmaster? Well, to tell the truth, she does not see much of him; he never comes to see her in her classroom. He was very kind on the first day of term, and his little talk about not expecting too much of her to begin with, and settling down in her own good time, was rather sweet and reassuring then. But when she plucked up courage to go and ask him if the school's psychologist had ever examined Sandra who seemed to be mentally deficient, he replied that one should not think that one could shelve one's problems, but rather one should buckle down to them, and that Sandra would learn to read in her own good time if Miss Smith kept plugging away.

The other teachers are invariably kind too, and any help Susan has received has come from them. But they are understandably concerned with the affairs of their own new classes, and more inclined to sympathize than to enter into a dialogue on method and procedure. 'It will come', they say, or, 'That Melvin always was a pest. Glad I haven't got him any more'. One or two actually feel that, having just left college, she ought to be full of new ideas and methods.

Of course the fact that she has had to find expensive lodgings right on the other side of town has not helped at all. Nor has the fact that the authority did not give her any salary until the last Thursday of September, so that she is still trying to pay back the £50 she borrowed from her father to live on during that first month.

Examine the reality

It is time to stop and admit that Susan is a figment of my imagination, as you have probably suspected. Nobody could have all those doubts and troubles at the start of teaching, you may have thought. Well, I have piled them on a bit, but I must add that I have met many probationers who have had a worse beginning than Susan, and one or two whose experiences have been traumatic. You primary teachers, look back at your own first job; ask around your colleagues if you yourself were lucky enough to have a good start. You will find that many of the woes I have listed are common to beginners in our primary schools. I would submit that most of them can be summed up under two headings. The first is the lack of proper briefing about the probationer's new school. The second is the gulf between the college's preparation for the profession and the actuality of the first post.

Let us first consider the new teacher's introduction to the school. Please excuse me if I generalize, and more power to your elbow

if your school is the exception to my general remarks! It is a well-documented fact that British teachers are not great readers of educational research.* Similarly, we pride ourselves that we run our schools by an amalgam of common-sense and practicality, with less resort to diagnostic tests than any other civilized country. Any lecturer will tell you that when teachers do go on courses they tend to be impatient with theory but eager for the practical details. Consider how difficult this makes life for the beginner. One has to acquire this know-how by experience. I'll wager that a German probationer will be told by the head, 'Here is a copy of the code of conduct for *Volksschulen* for Nordrhein-Westfalen. Here is the curriculum for the third year and a list of the textbooks prescribed, and here is a copy of the school rules, and your personal timetable'. My apologies to the Germans if their schools have changed since I lived there, but the point is that in England nothing is laid down, or very little. How many headteachers give probationers a talk about the educational aims of their school? How many have prepared written notes on the curriculum for all the teachers, or provided lists of available equipment and where it is to be found, or written notes on the district and its amenities? Surely these guides would be helpful? And if the headteacher is too busy to keep a constant eye on the progress of the new teacher (and I do believe that the headteacher's job gets ever more complex), then why not implement the idea of the professional tutor?

Professional tutor

I like to think that every school could have a wise, experienced teacher who would receive extra pay and be given the time to concentrate on initiating the new entrants to the profession into the primary tradition. This would then mean that every school had thought out its own place in that tradition and that the whole staff, and not only the professional tutor, would be able to explain the method and reason of the school to the new teacher. What I am asking for is that we should add a respect for, and a knowledge of, educational research to our common-sense approach. I am sure that this would give us the best of both worlds. It must also help the new teacher who has been nourished on theory by the colleges.

We must end the situation where the probationer 'muddles through', and substitute a probationary year, which is a learning year, with the learning organized and arranged by the school. The professional tutor, or the head if one is not available, must take the new teacher through the ideas on which the school is run, and show how those ideas are implemented in the curriculum. There should be regular periods, if possible in school time, when

* See, for example, Cane and Schroeder, *The Teacher and Research* Slough: NFER, 1970.

the probationer's handling of her children can be discussed and analyzed in an atmosphere which will encourage her to express her doubts and even any fears she may have. She must be reassured that she is part of an organization which has direction and purpose, and whose members are all united in that purpose. She must be shown the importance of diognosis, of good motivation for work, of evaluation, and of record-keeping. I think that all these things can be summed up by saying that she must know that she is receiving a professional introduction to a distinguished profession. The haphazard approach must disappear.

In preparing students to become teachers I believe that the colleges do not give the students enough time in schools either to observe teachers at work or to discuss with their tutors what they have seen. I do not refer to school practice, for I would not want any pressure on the students at this stage. They should analyse the way they saw teachers working and their reasons for acting in a particular way. This would presuppose that tutors were *au fait* with current practice.

If we had these professional tutors, they could be invited back to the college to assist in the discussions on what the students had observed at their schools. In some colleges there have been schemes of this nature. I myself have been involved in a scheme run by the Berkshire College of Education, whose first year students spent a considerable time in my school; afterwards I discussed with the tutor what the students had seen and done. Secondly, I think that many colleges must insist that their education lecturers keep in touch with contemporary practice. I have often lectured on team teaching at colleges and have been surprised to find at one or two of them that I was the only voice they would hear talking about that particular subject. Yet many of today's students will go straight into teams in their first appointments. Mind you, they will tend to be better off than most probationers. Team teachers are apt to spend more time talking about what they are doing and why they are doing it, and this cannot be bad for the newcomer.

I find that I have said nothing about outside agencies, for example, advisers and teachers' centres. Of course the adviser should make the new teacher's welfare a first consideration and there should be meetings so that the new teachers can compare notes. But I do believe that the new teacher is formed in the school and by the school, once the college has finished its work. Susan Smith was probably doing much better than she thought she was; the pity is that there was nobody to tell her so.

Trends 1976/1

School-supervised practice in junior schools

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Class teachers can play a vital role during a student's period of teaching practice, but often their experience is not adequately used. This article outlines a scheme to give them a central part in teaching practice supervision.

For the past three years, half the postgraduate students in Liverpool University, who are preparing for work in junior or middle schools, have been supervised on their ten-week practice by the schools themselves. Students and class teachers are all asked if they wish to participate in the scheme and are then carefully matched by personality and likely teaching styles. Otherwise, those who are supervised in their schools possess a normal distribution of potential teaching ability, judged on the work of the previous term which includes about three weeks of varied experience with children.

Arrangements are fully discussed beforehand by the university supervisors, the head and class teachers, and the students. To avoid any confusion everyone is told what each person's responsibilities are. The head teacher has overall responsibility for the welfare and professional development of the two students in his school and, at weekly meetings, will discuss with them any problems which may arise. Such problems are also recorded by the student in a log-book which he submits to the head teacher at regular intervals. The latter also writes a final report on, and recommends a grade for, each student.

The class teacher (known as the 'school tutor') is responsible for the student's daily work and progress, helping with his long and short-term planning, observing him teaching and giving him appropriate feed-back. In addition to less formal contacts, he meets his student at a regular time each week and keeps the head informed by sending him a weekly progress report.

At first, the student works as the teacher's aide; but gradually the roles are reversed until, although he continues to receive some help, the student plans all the work and teaches full-time. Students return to the University for one day a week during the first half of the term to keep in touch with each other and with their supervisors. Supervisors visit the schools twice during the term; once primarily to talk to the head and class teachers and once to observe the student teaching. They are, however, available for consultation at any time during the practice.

Relations between students and school tutors

In general, heads and class teachers are very satisfied with the scheme although, each year, there have been cases where relations between individual students and the school tutors have become very strained.

These cases tend to follow a fairly common pattern, involving the frequent postponing or cancellation of weekly meetings and a related breakdown in communication. When this coincides with the student's assumption of considerable responsibility for the class and his first experience of severe difficulties over classroom management or discipline, the situation can easily deteriorate unless appropriate action (preferably on the part of the head) is quickly taken.

The reason for this unhappy state of affairs seems fairly clear. For his part, the tutor finds himself torn between his role of helper and assessor. He sees his class 'going downhill' and, since the interest of his pupils remains his prime concern, he tends to stress his evaluative function. It is difficult for him to do this from a detached standpoint, however, for he sees his class mishandled and led into bad habits by a student whom he increasingly perceives as being lazy, ill-prepared, disorganized, and unsympathetic towards children with whom he, the teacher, has previously established a good relationship.

The student, on the other hand, knows that things are going badly but feels that he is not receiving the constructive guidance which might enable him to do better, and so his self-confidence oozes away.

Clearly, the 'failure' of the student and the breakdown in communication between himself and the class teacher are not initiated by the incompetence of either.

Teaching practice: some general principles

Were we able to identify those qualities which characterize the successful tutor, we might then be able to isolate those characteristics which militate against success. With this in view, I spoke for two hours with each of three tutors who, over the past three years, have shown a capacity to be of great help to five weak students. From these interviews and from questionnaire responses in which students recorded, for example, the times of weekly meetings and the type and origin of the help they received, it was possible to outline a few general principles.

The successful tutor tries to make the student feel welcome in the school both by expressing pleasure at the prospect of his assistance and by making him believe that he has something unique to contribute. All matters of school routine, the marking of the registers, the location of equipment, and so on, are explained privately so that the student's inexperience is not publicly paraded. The student is also introduced to the class as 'another teacher' and is either given his own desk or allowed to share the teacher's.

Attempts are also made to acquaint him with any pitfalls on his beginning to teach and, if necessary, unobtrusive action is taken to prevent him from undermining his credibility with the class. So that the children should not regard him as merely a 'spare part', he is involved from the outset in hearing them read, marking books and helping with ongoing work. He is not, however, left alone with the children nor does he assume direct authority until he has familiarized himself with classroom norms and practice.

Similarly, the tutors will go to great lengths to ensure that his first formal contact with the class is successful not only in his own eyes but in those of the children. This entails extremely careful selection of subject matter and thorough preparation on the part of both student and tutor. The choice of material is guided, though not to the exclusion of the student's own ideas. However, if the student has difficulty in selection and planning, the choice of material is left to him, while both participate in the planning, with the teacher taking notes as it takes shape. The lesson is then talked through after school. If the tutor feels that preparation has been inadequate, this first encounter will be postponed.

It is important that the first lesson should produce tangible results — a picture, a piece of writing or a simple artefact — thus it is hoped that both children and student will feel that something has been achieved. The tutor is always the first to praise the end product. A tight rein is kept on preparation until the student has gained in self-confidence and a good relationship has been established with the class. Even then, the teacher will continue to warn of pitfalls in order to avoid the loss of morale or damage to the children.

Guidance from the tutor

The tutor states his own and the school's expectations and, having set standards for what is and what is not acceptable, he will then give negative as well as positive criticism. His success in this will depend upon two factors. First, negative criticism, or even condemnation, must take place in a general atmosphere of concern for the student's well-being. The tutor's comments should be related to specific incidents or actions and he has, therefore, to spend a great deal of time in the classroom but always ostensibly on other business so that he is not perceived by the children as watching the student. He may also come in unexpectedly at the end of a session or take note of exchanges between student and children outside the classroom.

When the student has sufficient confidence to work on his own, the tutor may come in to observe specific pedagogic strengths and weaknesses. He must be alert to respond quickly to any improvements or lapses. The weaker the student the greater the need for specific guidance and speedy feed-back. Indeed, the job may be broken down into a hundred tiny actions from remembering to

mention a particular point to the children before their work starts to counting scissors at the end of a session.

It is not true that tutors carry students through their practice. Once the student has been exposed for long enough to the appropriate standards of planning and preparation, and has been given plenty of chance to get to know the children both individually and as a class through working with them in groups or as a whole, he is allowed to make mistakes. Indeed, he is encouraged to do so. The tutor will, however, be on hand to assist in diagnosing troubles and to suggest remedies.

The tutor will talk an error over and get the student to suggest ways in which it might be prevented in the future. The student will then repeat the exercise so that he may make the necessary correction. The analogy with the teach-view-teach cycle of classic micro-teaching is clear and, as with micro-teaching, errors are viewed as an essential part of the learning process.

The clear statement of expectations, the development of a trusting relationship, and the candid and constructive discussion of mistakes or weaknesses are all facilitated by the fact that, for the first few weeks, student and tutor live in each other's pockets. The student is with his tutor in the yard, at lunch and in the staff room; he assists in everything from cleaning the board to taking the lunch-time recorder class. The tutor is at constant pains to explain his every action since the beginner may not perceive the significance of apparently minor details.

As well as making explicit his own expectations and standards, the tutor also finds out about the student's aspirations and fears. He accepts his responsibilities as the senior partner for keeping communication channels open, for recognizing the signs of stress and for making allowances for the student by endeavouring to see things from his point of view. If the framework of security so constructed rests on firm foundations, then tutors generally find that a high level of interaction will persist.

Conditions of success

A tutor with a weak student has not only to reconcile the conflicting roles of helper and assessor but to spend much time, in and out of school, listening and talking — an exercise which requires the expenditure of a great deal of nervous energy.

Despite preventative measures, he may have to stand back and watch children, for whose development he is ultimately responsible, behaving in ways which he would not tolerate. For weeks he may have to live with the feeling that he is not succeeding in his new role because his student appears to be making no progress. Without abandoning his responsibilities as class teacher, the school tutor must become a patient counsellor and skilled analyst of his own and others' teaching and learning. It is a task which requires maturity, sympathy, detachment, and pedagogic skill.

There are three keys to success in this complex and demanding

task. First, prevention is better than cure. Whatever the student's weaknesses he should be prevented, as far as possible, from exhibiting them until he and his class have acquired confidence in his ability to save the situation. Second, prevention can go on for too long. As the student's confidence increases he will wish to test himself in situations of growing difficulty. Finally, whatever happens, communication between student and tutor must not break down. As long as it exists, the student can receive feed-back about his performance.

If teachers are to become involved, as school or professional tutors, in the initial training of their colleagues, they may need opportunities to discuss the implications of their new role and to find ways of preparing themselves to fill it.

Trends 1976/1

Epilepsy: the invisible handicap

ANN HACKNEY

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More than 80 per cent of epileptic children are being educated in the normal school system where their disability may not be known to the authorities. The major fit is, of course, easily recognized and allowed for, but what can be done to ensure that teachers are more aware of the less obvious signs of epilepsy, a condition that can seriously impair the learning and the development of the child?

Every brain is capable of abnormal electrical activity given adequate stimulus. Many adults experience such activity in electro-convulsive therapy for depression; many babies convulse occasionally in high fevers. The term epilepsy is used when individuals have a periodic tendency to experience this cerebral dysfunction. Sometimes the reason is known. Minute lesions in the brain left by disease or injury can act as a trigger and when recordings are made of brain activity on an EEG (electroencephalogram), it is possible to pin-point the area of the lesion. At other times, the EEG records the abnormal signals but there is no obvious focus and no evidence of previous insult to the brain.

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* The author has been engaged since June 1973 on a three-year project of research, commissioned and funded by the DES, studying teachers' perception and experience of epileptic children, who may suffer relative educational failure.

Occasionally more than one member of a family shows this tendency and one can only postulate that they share a lowered resistance to occasional dysfunction. The trigger mechanism may come from outside sources such as flickering lights or patterns. The effects are as varied as the causes. The generalized fit involving the whole body in unconsciousness and convulsive movement is only one manifestation, but is perhaps the one most readily associated with the term epilepsy in the public mind. The other manifestations are less dramatic: individual parts of the body alone may be affected if the cerebral activity does not encompass the whole brain; there may be brief periods of blankness without a fall or convulsive movement; strange patterns of behaviour may be set in motion; there are fits so subtle that there is no outward sign. The individual may experience only one type of fit or a combination. Constant medication is usually effective in reducing or even eliminating the incidence of fits.

Epilepsy in children

In many ways epilepsy among children presents problems of complexity rather than size: nevertheless the size is not negligible. There are usually said to be about 60,000 children of school age with epilepsy, that is approximately eight children in every thousand. One per cent of these attend special schools for children with epilepsy; about 15 per cent attend other special schools, hospitals and institutions because their epilepsy is only one part of a multiply-handicapping condition. Over 80 per cent are in the normal school system where their epilepsy may not be known to either school or school medical authorities.

That would be the end of the story were it not for a growing body of evidence that these latter children, for whom there is no special provision, are 'vulnerable, medically, educationally, and socially'. Recent studies at the Park Hospital for Children, a national centre for children with epilepsy, confirmed previous reports. Children with epilepsy at normal schools run a high risk of academic underachievement and of varying degrees of disturbed behaviour. Their vulnerability is explicable but they do not yet receive the understanding and protection which a caring society owes to any vulnerable member.

The interaction of epilepsy with education and behaviour is complex. Like others with chronic medical conditions these children are liable to miss more school time than average, through visits to doctors and hospitals and through times when they are not well enough to attend school. This must not be exaggerated, however, nor compared in any way with the interference to learning that many of the children experience in the classroom. The most obvious interference is an actual major fit and its recovery time, but this at least is recognized and allowed for. Fits of a minor nature are less obvious but may create a more serious learning problem. These fits may be detected in small

bodily movements, rolling of the eyes or a blank gaze when the brain is 'switched off' to outside signals, but these fits can often go unnoticed in a busy classroom. The 'switching off' is not too disastrous if the child is working on his own and can pick up the thread of what he was doing, although it is wasteful in time and can leave the child confused. In oral teaching it can lead to persistent gaps which make nonsense of a whole lesson. Laboratory experiments have shown that the subclinical seizures, detectable to an observer only on a EEG recording, frequently impair concentration.

Inconsistencies in performance

Children with epilepsy often show inconsistencies in performance going hand in hand with the fluctuation of epileptic activity. In extreme cases, a wave of activity can be heralded by a deterioration in fine motor skills and subsequent illegible handwriting or uncharacteristic and strange mistakes in spelling and reading. Other children may show permanent inconsistencies between skills.

For although children with epilepsy at normal schools span the whole range of normal intellectual ability, they include more than their fair share of uneven intellectual profiles. Often this is because the initial cause of their epilepsy has led to an uneven development of brain function. It is of particular concern in school performance if either the left brain which houses the verbal skills has been affected, or the visuo-spatial skills which appear to be so important in learning to read. Such children then have a long struggle to reach the standards in many academic subjects which their overall ability would suggest they were capable of.

It is popularly supposed that continual medication is a barrier to learning and in some children this may be an important factor. However, this will not normally apply to the children in normal schools except when their medication may need adjustment. It is more likely that a failure to maintain a regular drug regime will lead to an increase in epileptic activity and a deterioration in performance.

Underachievement

Children often respond favourably to high expectations, but many epileptic children may be demonstrating in their underachievement a response to underexpectation created by past performance or by a misplaced sympathy for their disability. There is evidence, again from laboratory experiments, that epileptic activity can be inhibited when children are involved in, and absorbed by, a task, or exacerbated by boredom and inactivity. A further complication, however, is that stressful situations can trigger epileptic episodes. Examinations are a particular nightmare to children whose memory suffers inter-

mittent interference and examination results may be at odds with work produced on more relaxed occasions. Only by sensitivity to this problem will teachers gauge from results the appropriate amount of pressure.

It is perhaps not surprising that approximately one in three children with epilepsy at normal schools is reported to be underachieving and that school reports are peppered with 'could do better if he tried', 'day dreams', 'inattentive', 'needs to concentrate', 'not really with us'. The behaviour problems are just as complex and are sometimes a further manifestation of the underachieving child. Many studies have linked maladjustment with retardation and suggested that early learning difficulties can create behaviour problems. Children whose capabilities are inconsistent and who may be criticized for behaviour over which they have no control are likely to feel more frustrated than most over their lack of achievement. We have already seen that underexpectation may be damaging, but there are children with epilepsy who run the risk of overexpectation because the full extent of their disability is not recognized.

The initial insult to the brain which set off the epilepsy may also have caused a general lowering of intellectual ability. This may be difficult for a family or teacher to appreciate if the child is out of line with his siblings in ability but retains similarities of manner and vocabulary. There is a natural reluctance to accept the hidden damage to the brain in an outwardly healthy body. Other children of higher ability may simply be unable to live up to their potential ability because their epilepsy is too persistent. These children may often react in a negative fashion to the unrealistic demands of home and school.

Behaviour disorders

There is evidence too of behaviour disorders even when the child functions well at school, at least on an academic level. The reasons may well lie in the nature of epilepsy itself. Fits are strange, even frightening. Some children may be disturbed by their fits, particularly if they experience an aura — an advance warning given by a variety of sensations often very frightening in themselves. Even if they know nothing of the fit they can see the reactions of others which may include horror, pity, fear or rejection. Some have the embarrassment of knowing that they may become incontinent in a fit. Fits may be well controlled and infrequent but there is still the risk of feeling 'different' because the tablets have to be taken regularly, perhaps at school, and there may be restrictions on normal school activities like swimming, physical education and games.

At home the child with epilepsy can sometimes suffer from an overprotective attitude. His activities are unnecessarily restricted and he finds it difficult to lead an independent existence. He may also suffer the rejection or hostility which any child with a

disability can incur. His disability may lead to considerable stress and disturbance among other members of the family. Further difficulties arrive with the end of a school career when the young person with epilepsy becomes aware of the suspicions roused in employers and landladies and the restrictions imposed on driving and other potentially hazardous occupations.

These causes of disturbance might be regarded as the side effects of epilepsy, but disturbed behaviour patterns and mood changes can be a direct result of certain types of epilepsy and of some medication. Very occasionally there can be a surgical remedy but this is not easy to achieve without damage to important healthy tissue.

To the high rate of underachievement then must be added a high risk of psychological disturbance of a fairly serious nature, and also a much higher rate than normal of minor behavioural disturbances. This must not conceal the fact that many children with epilepsy lead normal, successful lives at school and afterwards, have no problems in social relationships or employment, and would regard this picture of gloom as totally divorced from their experience. Their only grudge against epilepsy may be that in some countries it robs them of full immigrant status. Nevertheless, they are fortunate and if the normality of their lives were better known epilepsy might gain a better reputation. For the less fortunate it is possible that the potential gloom could be lightened simply by people knowing and understanding and acting upon their knowledge.

Epilepsy and learning

The years of the maximum prevalence of epilepsy overlap with the most important years for learning. It is, therefore, very important that all teachers should know about a disability that is likely to be encountered in a teaching career. The encounter between a teacher and an epileptic child may be a unique event for the teacher, but to the child it is a commonplace occurrence. How the teacher handles the situation may be of great significance in the child's development. A general introduction to the disability with all its complexity and variations and threats to learning could be justified in any training scheme.

Facilities for teachers' meetings are already organized by the British Epilepsy Association. It would be helpful to see on film various forms of fits so that the minor manifestations are recognized and the major ones lose their initial shock value. Teachers will then be able to deal with the latter calmly and instil in other children an attitude of sympathy and understanding without undue fuss or fear. If the minor fits are recognized, the teachers can at least avoid the mistake of labelling the child stupid or lazy for not hearing or understanding.

This background information will be of little use unless the teacher can then learn about an individual child's epilepsy. At

present, teachers are not only told little about epilepsy in general, but are often told nothing about a particular child's epilepsy, and so may not begin to realize how a child might be helped. It is common for parents and doctors to regard it as a purely medical problem and to say very little about it. If a child suffered from some disability of sight or hearing this would be recognized as a threat to education and teachers would be told and asked to make every provision to minimize the handicap. Unfortunately epilepsy is not yet regarded in this light. A growing realization that epilepsy can affect most aspects of a child's life — learning, personal relationships and job prospects — may lead to more openness and communication between all those interested in the child's welfare. Only then will the disability cease to be confounded by ignorance and misunderstanding and may even be alleviated.

Full reports

If a full psychological and medical report were available for all children with a neurological disorder on entry to school, and at regular intervals afterwards, many of the hazards outlined earlier would be circumvented. Teachers would know the child's intellectual strengths and weaknesses, his potential achievement, and the limitations imposed by his epilepsy. The dangers of under or over-expectation could be avoided; the more subtle interference effects of epileptic activity could be detected and allowed for. They might even be remedied by different teaching strategies, such as programmed learning of essential material in which a child can monitor his own progress and is not dependent upon intermittent verbal or visual instruction.

Information about the child's academic progress and the progress of his epilepsy could be shared by a team of doctors, teachers, and educational psychologists throughout his school career. Teachers are sometimes the first to detect a deterioration in academic performance which may indicate the need for a change of medication or herald a new phase in a changing disorder. Their observations and records can be of invaluable help to those concerned with the medical management and can assist the psychologists to devise techniques to combat learning problems. Such a team approach should prove beneficial when a child is thinking of employment and has to come to terms with possible clashes between his wishes and his capabilities. Employers too might welcome advice from a well-informed team when applications are considered.

Conspiracy of silence

If the benefits gained during a school career from informed and understanding teachers are not to be lost in later life, there must also be greater understanding and knowledge among the general

public. Too often 'epileptic' appears in newspaper headlines about lurid incidents, without any consideration of whether the epilepsy was relevant. Consequently there is a tendency to link epilepsy with the sort of undesirable behaviour which only occurs among the minority of any section of the community.

Even when serious articles do appear they may contain mistakes and misconceptions which, because of the very responsible attitudes of their presentation, may do even more harm. Because most people will have a very limited personal knowledge of people with epilepsy, their attitude may be coloured by the way it affects someone they know. The greatest need is to publicize the wide variety of conditions which share this one name so that employers in particular learn to judge people as individuals rather than to have a blanket reaction to the disability. If parents continue to see only the disastrous results of prejudice and stigma, it is very difficult to convince them that frankness about their child's handicap can only be beneficial to his development. They must be helped to break the conspiracy of silence which continues to feed this prejudice.*

* The DES has published two booklets, *Integrating Handicapped Children* and *Safety in Practical Departments* (DES Safety Series No. 3), both of which give practical advice to teachers encountering epileptic children for the first time. *Integrating Handicapped Children* is available from the Department itself. *Safety in Practical Departments* can be ordered from any bookshop, price 32p.

Business studies: changes in accommodation, courses and teaching methods

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Further education students in pursuit of a national or particular professional award require a different educational environment and teaching system from the traditional pattern offered in universities and polytechnics. Has the further education system responded to this need for change in accommodation, courses and teaching methods?

The changing pattern of education has created a number of new establishments which do not fall into any traditional slot in the system. Within the sector which is loosely referred to as 'further education' there has emerged a type of college which is primarily, though not always exclusively, concerned with advanced level work. It was formerly thought that most advanced work in the FE sector would be found in the polytechnics and those colleges specially designated as centres for advanced studies. This was not to be, perhaps because students preparing for national awards and the examinations of professional bodies found tuition of the right kind in other colleges.

Students who undertake advanced work in the FE sector are full-time, part-time day, sandwich, or are on block release or evening courses. Generally they are highly motivated and have a specific objective in view, namely a professional qualification or a national award which will promote the achievement of their career ambitions. It is possibly this point, more than any other, which distinguishes them from the students of universities and, to some extent, polytechnics. Additionally, their average age is higher than that of university and polytechnic students; there appears to be less interest in extra-mural activities and little student unrest. Students have a strong attachment to their courses and are often categorized by career aims, being referred to as 'bankers', 'accountants', 'civils' and 'HNDs'. This identification by course is further enhanced by the arrangements whereby students are encouraged to treat their course tutors as the 'fount of all knowledge' and the person to turn to in times of personal and academic doubt. Such a system of pastoral care by course tutors suggests that colleges might build on this strength by giving the course group even greater recognition.

The course centre

If students are course-oriented it would seem logical to provide teaching accommodation based on courses. Such accommodation recognizes the special needs of a particular course and acknowledges that students require to polarize on a course centre. The centre should be a large room equipped with easy chairs and coffee tables and have tables with side partitions for use as private study cubicles along the walls. This main room would serve course members as a centre for private study, a focal point for discussions and seminars, a meeting place for social activities, and double as a lecture room from time to time. The breakdown of its precise usage can only be determined by a detailed study involving students and staff.

In addition to a course office, South-West London College plans to have a course reference library and store housed in a room adjacent to the course centre and under the joint control of the course tutors and college librarian. The store will house teaching aids, stocks of handouts, case studies, teaching equipment, such as desk calculators, and any other items which need to remain under the control of teaching staff.

A course centre benefits students by providing them with a focal point for a specific course. Additionally, such centres could benefit the local education authority financially by encouraging students to undertake more private study thus reducing the class-contact hours of staff. In many cases, students in colleges are taught for up to twenty-eight hours each week, and the justification for this large number of face-to-face teaching hours is said to be 'that we must cover the syllabus'. To a certain extent, this was a reasonable claim when entry requirements were five GCE O-levels, but the situation has changed when entry requirements are two GCE A-levels. With a higher entry requirement it is considered that students are better equipped to organize a larger part of their own studies and that too many hours in the classroom hinder rather than encourage learning. It would seem that a course timetable of twenty hours per week in the classroom, leaving ten hours per week for private study in the course centre, is more than adequate for the average student. Also, by teaching a full programme to impart the basics of each subject in the first term of the course and progressively reducing the amount of face-to-face contact in the second and third terms, it is possible to introduce more private study and seminar work as the course and students develop.

There is still much to be learned about the conduct and organization of this type of course, but it seems reasonable and educationally sound to encourage the student to work on his own and to reduce his dependence on teachers. For the students, this may prove a traumatic, but necessary, experience as too many have been 'spoon fed' and come to rely upon their tutors to an unhealthy extent. At final professional level, the passing of

examinations is very much the responsibility of the student and the impact of even the best teacher is marginal. As a rough guide, the saving arising from the adoption of course centres might be 10 per cent – 20 per cent of the total teaching hours of a department. In reality, this would mean a reduction in overtime hours and fewer part-time teachers. The less tangible benefits would be a more realistic working week for many staff and fewer absences because of sickness due to overwork by students and staff.

Changing the approach to learning

The introduction of course centres must be accompanied by a change in the method of learning and, by implication, in the method of teaching. It is important that the student becomes aware at an early stage in his course that these changes are for his benefit and are not just an administrative convenience. Each student must understand that he is a member of a special group pursuing a programme of study aimed at a common goal. This is usually appreciated when he joins the other members of his course and they are assigned to a specific tutor and course centre.

The importance of persuading first year students that they are responsible for their own studies cannot be overstressed — success of the course will often depend on how well this concept is accepted. From the beginning, the student should undertake some unsupervized work, which encourages initiative and research, has a direct bearing on the course of study, and enables him to call for occasional help when he feels this is required. To assist in bringing about these changes in learning habits each student may be required to write an extended essay on an agreed subject. The essay is intended to be an interesting and worthwhile piece of prose written over two terms and related in some way to the theme of the course. During the first six weeks of the course the essay subject is agreed and a synopsis prepared and discussed with a tutor. The student then spends about fifteen weeks preparing the final draft under his tutor's guidance. In courses which are internally examined, the essay can account for up to 25 per cent of the final marks and may be subject to a *viva* upon completion. A student will make considerable use of the course centre when preparing his extended essay and it is hoped that many students will provide a copy of their essay for the course centre library.

There is nothing new about extended essays as they have been a requirement of the National Awards in Business Studies for many years. However, the provision of a course centre especially equipped to meet the needs of students preparing essays is a relatively new departure and an innovation which might be encouraged. There is no reason why similar types of individual work cannot be undertaken using the course centre as a focal point of the work. Work study assignments for management

courses, industrial projects for cost accountants and engineers, and design work for art students, all seem to lend themselves to this approach.

To get the maximum benefit from the use of course centres, specialist teaching rooms, projects, and extended essays, it is highly desirable that courses be designed, structured, and examined by the college. Many professional bodies are permitting colleges to offer courses which give complete exemption from their examination requirements. The joint committees for national awards have always encouraged colleges to structure their own courses and have pioneered this approach for many years. However, despite the preference for internally examined courses, course centres and specialist teaching rooms can still be employed effectively when courses are examined externally, and the lack of internally structured courses should not discourage colleges from experiment with their use.

Changing the approach to teaching

The encouragement of self-motivation in students requires that teaching staff alter their teaching methods. For some teachers, this is not an easy thing to do as it calls for a completely new look at methods which have stood them in good stead for many years. It has become apparent that many courses at foundation level are not designed to be a part of the professional training of students but rather an educational experience using technical subjects as a vehicle to impart concepts. This is a subtle change of approach which has often gone unnoticed and which has not been spelled-out by the professional bodies.

The most important change of teaching method in course centres is likely to be a reduction in the number of class-contact hours and the division of hours between formal lectures, seminars, and tutorials. The table below, which shows the number of hours devoted to each form of teaching on an accountancy foundation course, illustrates how the formal lectures are gradually replaced by tutorials and seminars and indicates, by implication, that more and more use is made of the course centre. Most of the formal lectures take place in specialist teaching rooms but tutorials and seminars are usually held in the course centre.

The table on page 38 shows that learning gradually ceases to be teacher-oriented and often becomes student-oriented or student-group oriented—as group members use the course study as a resource centre. The swing from formal lectures to tutorials and seminars continues in the later years of the course and teaching staff become more concerned with the direction of studies rather than the delivering of formal lectures.

To assist with this change of emphasis, there needs to be a change in the use of supporting services and teaching aids. Possibly, the most important piece of equipment needed by tutors is a high-speed copier for the production of discussion documents

and handouts. The speedy reproduction of discussion documents is important as tutors will often use extracts from current newspapers, and any delay in typing and duplicating will destroy the desired effect on the students. To supplement the handouts issued by tutors, the college library should maintain a press cutting collection which should receive contributions from all members of staff, filed under the main subject headings of the courses. Each course centre will have a certain amount of audio-visual equipment available for the use of staff and students.

		Number of Teaching Hours			
Subject		**Term 1**	**Term 2**	**Term 3**	**Total per week**
Accounting	T	–	–	2	
	S	2	2	2	
	L	3	3	1	5
Law	T	–	–	2	
	S	1	2	1	
	L	2	1	–	3
Statistics	T	–	–	1	
	S	1	1	1	
	L	2	2	1	3
Business	T	–	–	1	
organization	S	1	2	2	
and systems	L	2	1	–	3
Economic	T	–	1	2	
environment	S	2	2	2	
	L	2	1	–	4
					18

T=tutorial S=seminar L=lecture

The benefits

The benefits of a system of course centres and specialist teaching rooms fall into two categories:

Tangible. A reduction in class contact hours which will bring about a reduction in part-time staff and overtime hours worked by full-time staff; more economical use of accommodation and equipment.

Intangible. A more effective learning situation for students; opportunities for staff to develop new teaching methods particularly suited to small groups; a tighter and more personal

control over a student's progress together with the early detection of special weaknesses; a deeper involvement of students with their own progress and the realization that they are personally responsible for their success; an opportunity for each student to follow a pattern of study which suits him academically and temperamentally; the encouragement of a group to follow a social as well as an educational pattern of development.

It is very difficult to quantify the benefits as circumstances differ between colleges, but given a specific set of circumstances, a reasonable estimate of the cost and benefits should not be difficult to compute.

Successful course centres

Experience has shown that course centres are more successful in a college technical department than in the more academic departments possibly because of the integrated courses of study already operating in the field of business and technical studies. Course centres do not appear to be so successful where courses need to be created artificially, for example, a collection of GCE A-level subjects without the cohesion of a common theme and purpose. In the case of a series of professional examinations such as Foundation, Professional Sections 1, 2 and 3, it is preferable if each section has its own course centre — but a number of groups following the same section might be required to share a centre where facilities are not plentiful. The creation of course centres does not of course exclude other types of teaching accommodation, but it does require an act of faith on the part of the college coupled with firm administrative directive to staff and students on the organization and use of the centre and specialist teaching rooms.

Local education authorities and continuity of educational provision

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The last fifty years or so have seen a great many changes in educational thinking, some of them being reflected in changes in legislation. The local education authorities have mainly been responsible for implementing these changes and maintaining the continuity of educational provision. This article makes an assessment of what has been done, particularly since the 1944 Act.

The 1944 Education Act stemmed from a national determination for post-war social reform intended to eradicate the inequalities of the twenties and thirties. One of its central objectives was the creation of a continuous process of educational opportunity from nursery to further education. Local education authorities were given wide-ranging duties and powers under the Act, although the variety and extent of the provision was left largely to local initiative, particularly in further education.

For the past thirty years, LEAs have engaged in the formidable task of creating a framework of educational continuity in primary, secondary and further education. The main duties were in connection with statutory provision through the establishment and maintenance of sufficient schools for primary and secondary education and the appropriate range of teachers and equipment. Adequate facilities, unspecified except for part-time compulsory education to 18 in county colleges which has been overtaken by other developments, were to be provided for further education, including recreational and community development programmes.

During the period, successive governments with varying degrees of purpose, enthusiasm and assistance have pursued these national objectives in partnership with LEAs. Course corrections have been applied through subsequent legislation, regulations and circulars, fiscal controls, and local decisions influenced by a series of major reports on future educational provision. On occasions, progress has been made by pushes in salients in response to national or local pressures, apparently unrelated to other sectors of the education service, with the result that it is impossible to generalize with confidence about developments applicable to all LEAs. Nevertheless, the record of achievement

by LEAs in providing institutional continuity is impressive, particularly when it is seen in the socio-economic context of an unprecedented growth in school population, the provision of secondary education for all, its extensions to 15 and, more recently, to 16, and a remarkable growth in social demand for further and higher education.

Although there have been continuing problems of finance and other constraints, necessitating much improvization and ingenuity to resolve many difficulties, especially over accommodation, most LEAs have established patterns of continuous educational opportunity from nursery classes to degree courses in the public sector.

Three stages

The importance of a continuous and enlarged statutory system of education was reflected in the now familiar language of the 1944 Act in referring to 'three progressive stages' of primary, secondary and further education. This division of the education system has become embedded in the structure of local authority administrative practice and in the attitudes of teachers, parents and pupils. Perhaps the main reason for the emphasis on the three stages was to achieve new developments in separate primary and secondary schools and to accelerate post-Hadow reorganization, thus eliminating the 'all-age' (5–14 years) elementary school, a process not completed in some rural areas until the early sixties. The effect of the statutory division was to create some problems of continuity in the transition from primary to secondary education, which were partly concealed by the imperatives of the grammar schools' academic tradition, but were all too clearly revealed in a sense of accumulated failure in many secondary modern schools.

Before the introduction of the CSE in the mid-sixties and the beginning of the rapid increase in the number of comprehensive schools, an established sense of academic continuity was confined largely to the selective schools. At the point of transition from primary to secondary education, tension and concern existed over selection procedures which varied considerably among LEAs.

There was little mutual understanding of curricular matters between primary and secondary schools and hardly any contact between teachers. In Newsom's memorable phrase the transition was 'as straight a frontier in time as the 49th parallel is in space'. The frontier was a barrier, its conventions were scrupulously observed, and children were granted visas only on the prescribed terms. This administrative division still persists in many authorities as an educational one. It makes it difficult to pick up an individual pupil at the point reached in primary school so as to set the right pace with the appropriate method and approaches for the new ways and areas of learning in secondary education. In many LEAs, especially following the introduction of comprehensive

education, much has been done to improve continuity through increased teacher contact, interchange of staff, in-service courses specifically to examine and overcome local difficulties, and the use of more relevant records of the pupil's background and achievement. Above all, collaboration between primary and secondary schools has been most successful in developing curricula which straddle the traditional boundary of 11-plus.

The contribution of the Schools Council through several such projects has been particularly valuable not simply for their intrinsic qualities, but for the stimulation and guidance in encouraging teachers in the development of their own thinking about local needs and possibilities. Understandably, in those LEAs where middle schools are established, the overlapping and cooperation is most in evidence where capillary extension of primary approaches to learning combine with skills, methods and subject content previously exclusive to secondary education. Here the frontier has widened into a zone for the development of new ideas and curricula in providing better continuity for the individual pupil.

Other arrangements

It should not be forgotten that the rigidity of the bipartite system and its underlying assumptions and effects led some LEAs to introduce alternative arrangements for secondary education. These tried to broaden the opportunities for educational continuity in their areas during the fifties. Some of the changes were introduced principally for economic and practical reasons but, in addition, most shared in a growing dissatisfaction with the effects of selection procedures on parents, pupils, and primary schools, and the demonstrable limitations of the selection process itself as a predictor of future success. For example, Anglesey, Birmingham, Bristol, Coventry, Leicestershire, Liverpool, London, and the West Riding adopted schemes some years before government intervention in an effort to develop local solutions to various problems. These initiatives were subsequently included in Circular 10/65 as recognized patterns of comprehensive reorganization and in acknowledgement of the difficulties of changing the educational landscape without massive injections of capital investments for new buildings. The government's inability to provide for greater capital resources and the inescapable determinant of existing buildings created serious problems of institutional continuity in many LEAs. Some of the patterns chosen were clearly more dependent on existing buildings than on educational considerations and were phased over several years. But for the active discouragement in Circulars 10/65 and 10/66, more LEAs would probably have opted for middle school schemes.

The unavoidable preoccupation of LEAs with their duties for statutory continuity under the 1944 and 1964 Acts has resulted in a range of provision of perplexing variety. Contrary to the

widely held views of earlier years that comprehensive education would create a school system of dreary uniformity, there are now more than twenty different age-ranges in operation between the ages of 5 and 18 years. The position has become even more confusing since local government reorganization in that many of the new LEAs have variations within their enlarged areas inherited from former LEAs, especially urban authorities, including a few which retain selection at 11-plus.

Irrespective of the structural changes in secondary education, an important feature of local authority provision has been the extension of educational opportunities within all schools. The clear-cut differences between selective and non-selective schools were reduced with the growth of O-level courses in the latter. CSE, originally considered most appropriate for non-selective schools, is used, particularly Mode 3, by some selective schools, and the increasing diversity of sixth-form studies reflects changing ideas about the accessibility of educational opportunity in response to higher levels of achievement and adaptability. Comprehensive schools have added considerable momentum to this growth as more pupils exceed former expectations and proceed to further and higher education.

The influence of further education

Developments in secondary education have influenced, and in turn are affected by, those in further education. Beyond the statutory system, authorities have provided routeways of continuity in organized social, recreational, and vocational pursuits in youth clubs, evening classes, colleges of further education, and polytechnics. The growth of a remarkably diverse network of opportunities is a distinctively British characteristic with its roots in the history of inadequate provision in the last century. It has flourished partly for this reason, partly from increased leisure and improved educational standards, but mainly in response to social demand and the rapidity of technological change and industrial expansion in the last thirty years. The provision has been almost entirely initiated by LEAs carrying the major capital costs and recurrent expenditure in expanding facilities in buildings, equipment, materials and staffing at local, area, and regional colleges.

Close cooperation among authorities is achieved through regional advisory councils which coordinate the work of colleges in conjunction with industry, professional bodies, and Industrial Training Boards to provide courses at varying levels and avoid wasteful duplication. It was somewhat ironic that a group of regional colleges which had developed advanced courses through the generous provision of LEA resources in earlier years were removed from local control, eventually to become technological universities in the late sixties. The polytechnics now represent the apex of local authority provision, offering courses to degree level

and undertaking research, and will develop as the main foci of further and higher education in the public sector geared to the needs of industry, commerce and the professions at regional and national levels.

Thus, local authority provision includes an increasingly important element of higher education with a wide academic and training spectrum principally in 'applied' courses but including other academic work and teacher-training, both initial and recurrent.

The diversity and sheer size of further education has created problems in continuity beyond secondary education, with which it has an overlap in the 16-19 age range. The transition from secondary to further education has been complicated by major structural changes in both sectors during the past decade when rapid expansion and diversification occurred concurrently. Although schools cannot be expected to provide a total preparation for all pupils nor anticipate every eventuality after school, teachers attempt to interpret the adult world for pupils and offer guidance on decisions which have to be made about employment and further education.

Most schools have internal systems for personal and careers guidance: staff arrange visits to, and speakers from, industry and further education and, in cooperation with advisory officers, organize careers conventions. Linked or 'taster' courses between schools and colleges are not uncommon and in some areas schemes partially integrating O-level, A-level and national diploma courses on a shared school/college basis are well established.

All these enterprises contribute towards an effective and natural continuity between secondary and further education, but for many pupils the division between the two stages has not yet been bridged. Provision of staff, expertise, and time for careers guidance is generally inadequate, and the growth of relationships between schools, further education and employment is left too much to chance. The DES survey, *Careers Education in Secondary Schools,* indicated the under-provision in this area of continuity, where the need for young adults to make informed decisions about careers and employment is so vital.

In conclusion, a further general point remains to be made on continuity in local authority provision. The expansion in nursery education outlined in the 1972 White Paper was intended to provide for major growth in the restricted but extremely important pre-school sector. It now appears inevitable that under present economic conditions resources will be concentrated on maintaining statutory provision and expansion for the under-fives postponed indefinitely. This is particularly unfortunate because in the next few years at least, and for the first time since the end of the war, the reduction in the size of primary school age groups will release accommodation which

could be used for the under-fives. But it appears that the opportunity to provide continuity into the statutory system through a varied, flexible programme cooperatively undertaken between LEA's and voluntary organizations is not likely to extend beyond the £9 million nursery allocation for 1976/7.

Trends 1976/1

Advice, assistance and inspection in the USA

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This article is based on a year's study of supervisory practice in the UK and the USA.

The United States has for many years operated a comprehensive primary and secondary school system similar to ours, and has developed an effective practice for the supervision of teachers. *Good's Dictionary of Education* (1973 edition) provides a description of more than fifty types of supervision. For this article we chose to work within the definition of supervision as a process: 'Administrative behaviour chosen by persons involved in supervisory responsibilities as they attempt to influence other persons and situations in achievement of major tasks: components of this behaviour are directing and controlling, stimulating and initiating, analyzing and appraising, designing and implementing'.

The three levels of supervision in the USA

Within the United States, supervision exists on three levels: state, district, and school building.

State supervision. While each of the fifty states operates independent education departments, it is common practice for these departments to be concerned mainly with setting minimum standards which schools must meet if they operate within the state and qualify for financial assistance. The statutory minimum standards cover many areas, from teacher qualifications and curri-

culum designation to provision of school premises. The state department of education therefore employs qualified personnel in subject matter fields to directly assist local school districts in implementing educational objectives. Unfortunately, financial constrictions often limit the number of experts that can be employed. As a result, their work-load is often excessive to such an extent that they are not very effective at local school district level.

District supervision. The local school district, which will typically include three or four secondary schools and ten to twelve primary schools (that is about 10,000 pupils), is a very important unit in American education. The local district officers determine how much their schools will operate above the state minimum standards. Many factors enter into this determination such as money, educational expectation of parents in the community, and philosophy of the school district administrators. However, the extent to which the officers are able to reach their desired standards is dependent on the effectiveness of the supervision they can apply. Most districts employ a person designated as 'supervisor for curriculum and instruction'. This person, as the overall coordinator of both primary and secondary instruction, will be assisted by subject matter specialists (*e.g.* for reading, mathematics, science) whose duties include the implementation in the school buildings of the designated curriculum.

School building supervision. At the individual school building level, most schools employ department chairmen (heads of department) whose duties include assistance to the building principal (headteacher) and his assistants in the performance of their prime responsibilities as the instructional and administrative leaders of the building. Each department chairman should play a key role in providing curriculum leadership, supervision of instruction, and implementation of the district's general educational policy.

The status of an American supervisor

At all three levels, personnel employed in a supervisory capacity must meet educational training requirements determined by the state departments of education. Most American states require a minimum of five years successful teaching experience combined with in-service training in supervisory practices, curriculum development, and group leadership. These requirements, while not guaranteeing that the person selected will be an effective supervisor, at least ensure that he has been exposed to the mechanics of supervisory practice. The American supervisor is usually paid on a scale from 10 to 50 per cent above the salary of classroom teachers.

Supervision at local district level is the responsibility of the supervisors for curriculum and instruction who provide what are,

in reality, administrative directives which the teachers are expected to follow. At the school level the department chairman is charged with implementing a policy formulated by a school district rather than the policy of the school principal. His duties are clearly stated in a job description and his limits of authority are defined in teacher association contracts. The duties are standardized throughout a district and include direct observation of classroom teaching. The number and manner of the classroom observations are understood beforehand by the supervisor and teacher (for example, two observations in a probationary year).

Successful American supervisory schemes between teachers

To help make a subjective evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of each teacher, an evaluation form has been developed. The supervisor evaluates teacher performance in identified areas (for example, classroom management, manner and method of presentation, knowledge of subject matter, student participation) using a checklist supplemented by a narrative. Afterwards, the teacher and supervisor discuss the completed evaluation form and the teacher may add his own comments. While this may seem a radical step to some people in English education, its worth and effectiveness are supported by many teachers, administrators, and teachers' organizations within the United States.

Another scheme is known as 'informal intervisitation'. Supervisors encourage teachers within a department to observe the teaching techniques and methods of their colleagues, even though this means occasional re-arrangement of periods. This observation is then followed by a discussion between the two teachers involved, and, so it is hoped, both can grow educationally from their experience. Here there is no threat of censure, nor of any written record to be used against a teacher at a future date. Many American teachers who have cooperated on intervisitation said that they have found it valuable.

A third worthwhile practice employed at the school level is the 'buddy system'. In this system, experienced teachers volunteer to provide aid and assistance to probationary teachers or teachers new to a building. The school administrator then arranges an informal meeting before the start of the school year so that the 'paired' teachers can become acquainted. The experienced teacher, usually from the same department as his 'buddy', can then answer any number of questions about the workings of the school (chain of command, supply of chalk and board-cleaner, locations of eating facilities, and so on). As the year progresses, the experienced teacher will sometimes become the confidant of the new teacher and assist in solving minor problems before they become major crises. This plan has been used successfully in several areas of the United States, and it does a great deal to reduce some horrors of the first few weeks for a teacher new to a large school.

Curriculum guide-lines

Within the United States the availability of curriculum guides and course outlines provides great assistance to both probationary teachers and those teaching a course for the first time. These course outlines are an expansion of the syllabus, the syllabus being a very brief statement of the objectives of the course and a listing of the major topics to be covered. The course outline will contain suggested time-schedules for topics, teaching notes, and an indication of the depth of understanding expected of a pupil who has completed the course.

These aids are usually developed by experienced teachers working in conjunction with supervisory and administrative personnel and are often the result of revising and expanding lesson plans that have been used in the classroom. Some are developed and used on a statewide level, others on a district level, but in both cases they provide the interested teacher with a tried and proven guide with which to make long-term lesson plans. While these guides vary in size from several typewritten pages to a forty-page booklet going into such detail as suggestions on exercises and cross-references to standard textbooks, few teachers would attempt to go into a classroom without having thoroughly examined the course outline.

There does exist in the United States a very small minority of teachers who claim that the course outline or curriculum guide (the terms are used interchangeably) is restrictive and restrains their individuality and creativity.

Conclusion

Although it does not mention weaknesses in American supervisory practices, this article has identified strengths in the American system that could, we feel, be transferred to England and Wales —especially in the light of the James Report (1972) which has strengthened the case for a stronger and more dynamic supervision which would benefit new and probationary teachers.

Guidance services in Canadian secondary education

S. G. SATHAYE

Mr Sathaye is a lecturer at Mander College, Bedford

This article has been written from the author's first-hand experience and observation of the Canadian secondary schools' guidance services during his period as an exchange teacher in a Toronto high school.

To a British teacher used to seeing a lone careers master or mistress toiling away at teaching and advising (mostly in unsuitable places), the fact that Canadian secondary schools possess an officially approved administrative machinery to cope with students' problems comes as a revelation. For instance, in a typical mixed high school of 1300 students in East Toronto, Ontario, where the writer spent a year, the organization is well heeled and oiled. The principal has the overall responsibility of running the school assisted by a teaching staff of 120 and an office staff of six. The principal's immediate assistants are two male and one female vice-principals. The first two between them devote their attention to staff and student timetables, unpunctuality, absenteeism, truancy, bad behaviour, misconduct, and indiscipline generally, while the other is in charge of female students. All three work in close association with one another and so are aware of problem cases in the school. The vice-principals are supplied with relevant information by form teachers who keep in touch with parents or guardians daily by school telephones which are conveniently located in the general office.

Guidance services are offered separately by the guidance (also called counselling) department which functions, like any other subject department, in its own right. It performs a full-time job with a staff which includes the head, the assistant head, four counsellors, and two secretaries. Its scope covers three major areas: advice on the Credit System; resolution of problems of a private nature which are not touched by the vice-principals; and guidance on careers to school-leavers.

The concern of the guidance department

The guidance staff are qualified, experienced teachers who have undergone training in guidance techniques; they also attend special courses from time to time. They all have fully equipped offices with their own telephone and ready access to up-to-date information on further education and outlets for careers. Students are encouraged to approach them on their own initiative, for the

authorities firmly believe that interviews requested in this way are likely to be the most effective. Teachers also feel free to persuade students who, in their view, need help but are shy to consult the counsellors. The department is always ready to help either by building a programme of studies in harmony with students' personal interests and course objectives, or by providing the right circumstances for students to achieve their maximum potential.

In a city like Toronto, where the Canadian society is becoming increasingly multiracial, counselling can have many ramifications. So even if study programmes of individual choice are prepared satisfactorily, there is no guarantee that a student (the term 'pupil' is hardly ever used in Canadian high schools) is set on a straight course. There are four and five-year courses covering the age range of 15–19. On completion of the four-year course, students are awarded an Ordinary Diploma, and of the five-year course an Honour Diploma. They are then entitled to call themselves high school graduates — somewhat strange terminology to British ears. However, judging by the number of students who became 'drop-outs'—on an average about 30 per cent — before this goal is achieved, it is true to say that to some students at least, completion of a course is a daunting challenge. Moreover, what is disturbing is that the drop-outs are not just confined, as one might expect, to the last year or two when the going gets difficult, but all grades (equivalent to British forms) have them. The four-year course has grades nine to twelve, and the five-year course nine to thirteen. Guidance departments in all Canadian high schools are much concerned about this phenomenon.

The Credit System

The Credit System was first adopted by secondary schools throughout the province of Ontario in September 1972; now other provinces also have their own Credit Systems. It was introduced in response to the changing needs of a rapidly developing society during the late sixties, but was in the planning stage for five years. Its emergence ended the era of the external examination and streaming, both of which were developed on the British model Today, with the exception of one British-type public school in Ontario, all secondary schools are comprehensive. Since then, the major task of the guidance departments has been to explain and clarify the working of the new system. The Credit System has two aims: every student should have some exposure to each of the major fields of human knowledge, and the greatest possible opportunity to follow a programme that furthers his or her personal interests and aspirations. Thus students are no longer forced to take subjects at levels that are clearly beyond their grasp. They can choose a more interesting and relevant mix of subjects and still earn their graduation diploma.

Major fields of human knowledge

To meet these aims, study courses are grouped into categories: communications; social and environmental studies; pure and applied sciences; and arts.

Studies concerned with man's interchange of thought and with all modes of human expression form the category of communications where English, French, German, Latin, and shorthand are some of the options. Social and environmental studies are primarily concerned with man's unique nature and his interaction with his environment and his fellows. As such, they include economics, geography, history, world religions, people, and politics. Pure and applied sciences are a category where obviously emphasis is placed on mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and technology. Studies concerned with the aesthetic nature of man and the creative expression of that nature belong to the arts category which offers fine arts, graphic arts, music, theatre arts, physical and health education.

Although any options can be offered, some principals and parents feel strongly that certain subjects should be compulsory in the diploma programme. In such cases, particular subjects can be made compulsory for students who are not 18, provided the parents and the principal agree. The fact that all students are different is a vital reason why, under the Credit System, it is the individual school, not the Ministry of Education, or even the School Board, that bears the major responsibility for adapting the curriculum to best suit the individual needs of its students.

Assessment of work

The external examination is replaced by continuous internal assessment. It would be unfair to suggest, though, that this has automatically meant a drop in the standard of attainment. The final achievement is now viewed from a different standpoint. Thus for graduation, a student must earn a minimum of twenty-seven credits. Of these, thirteen credits must be from third and fourth year subjects, and of these six must be from the fourth year. The Honour Diploma requires six credits from the fifth year. The authors of the System believe that this ensures a well-rounded high school education. A credit is earned when a course is successfully completed during the scheduled time, and by securing 50 per cent marks for Ordinary, and 60 per cent marks for Honour Diploma. These are awarded after internal evaluation of all work done which includes classwork, assignments, tests, and internal examinations held in December and June.

The Credit System and the role of the guidance department

Those who are bewildered by these requirements and those who tremble at the prospect need encouragement and reassurance. This is exactly where the guidance department plays an important role.

The school referred to in this article, for example, mounted for the first time a full-scale exercise in which all members of staff, including the principal, students, and their parents or guardians were involved. A general survey of the students' and their parents' or guardians' wishes in respect of courses and subjects was carried out during the autumn term. Special days were then allocated for students to investigate the options available. Subject teachers prepared elaborate displays to attract students to their subjects and held special sessions to explain their importance and value with the help of visual aids. After this an 'option day' was set aside when students were asked to fill in, under the guidance of the counsellors, the final form declaring their choice. The processing of these forms was continued through the spring term and was concluded by a special announcement concerning the credit requirements. Students were told that if they could not obtain the credits as required during the normal school schedule, they could do so by attending night school or summer school and so need not despair: they could still complete their course within four or five years as the case may be.

Resolution of private problems

Even when the right choice is made, however, personal problems may interfere with its execution. In a society which is 'affluent and permissive', as is the Canadian society today, counsellors often have to face delicate and interpersonal situations. How trying this aspect of counselling can be may be illustrated by a few selected cases in which the writer was an interested party. Clash of cultures within an immigrant family is a common occurrence and largely stems from the parents' fear that their children will adopt the 'liberal, free and easy attitudes' of the English Canadians. Quarrels arose in one Greek family when the 16-year-old daughter who was the eldest of four left home to join her Canadian boyfriend. When this fact was discovered on an investigation of her frequent absences, her divorced mother, after consultation, compromised with her daughter on the question of 'nights out'. Language difficulty is experienced mainly by European immigrant children. One Czechoslovak girl admitted to the Grade 11 four-year course on the strength of her equivalent school attainment in her native country was very poor in English. She could not, for example, understand the meaning of the term 'valley' during a geography lesson. She was advised by her counsellor to attend specially designed 'English for foreigners' classes. Two students presented pretty tough problems not because they were unintelligent but because they were obstinate. Paul was taking a five-year course but had to repeat Grade 11 because he could not obtain credits in English and geography through lack of concentration, absenteeism, and his unsatisfactory work; his sole interest was the theatre arts. I myself, two counsellors, and even the principal tried hard to help him, and for a time he settled

down. But his resolve did not last long and he had to drop out. In the case of Stephen, a four-year Grade 11 student, the difficulty was the lack of adequate parental control and his association with undesirable companions who were known to be drug addicts. It was discovered that Stephen had experience of drugs and that is why he was often 'skipping school'. This alarmed his mother and she approached the guidance department on his behalf since he was already 18. His case was referred to a psychiatrist and apparently Stephen responded to his treatment. His results, however, were too poor to gain him any credits; but at least he was being rehabilitated. The counsellors, as usual, took his teachers into their confidence and asked them to look on this student as a special case in the hope of rescuing a potential drop-out.

Guidance to school leavers

Over seven million people — one-third of the Canadian population — live in Ontario, and its capital Toronto has a population of two and a half million. It is, in fact, the fastest growing town in Canada. Both the province and the capital, therefore, offer ample outlets and opportunities for post-school careers and courses. The guidance department keeps its doors open for advice throughout the year. From time to time, 'career days' are announced when displays of relevant materials such as brochures, course calendars, pamphlets on career prospects, are arranged with a great artistic flourish and even accompanied by 'with it' music. Special interviews are offered for aspirants to university places, that is, the elite of the school taking Grade 13. For those taking business studies, special arrangements are made which enable some of them, at least, to gain experience of working in offices or stores once or twice a week while still at school. The Department also organizes parents' meetings to discuss career possibilities and invites outside speakers from specialist fields. All student reports are card-indexed centrally and all information is treated as confidential. Thus, while interviewing students or answering queries about them, the counsellors have ready access to their files: only occasionally do they find it necessary to consult individual form teachers for extra information. School-leavers, in their turn, generally keep the guidance department informed about their whereabouts and progress, and this is reflected in the large attendance on Commencement Day when graduates are awarded their diplomas.

38 Brisbane Grove,
Hartburn,
Stockton-on-Tees,
Cleveland.

Dear Sir,

The article by P. J. Osmund, 'Authority in the Secondary School' (TRENDS 1975/3), seems refreshingly realistic. He is undoubtedly correct in saying that a majority of parents are looking to schools to provide protection against disruption and disorder and in some cases this is because they have abdicated responsibility themselves.

It seems clear to me that one of the main reasons for our current malaise is that leadership has almost become a pejorative term. Unless those people in our society who are in leadership positions are prepared to exercise leadership (and receive support when they do so) there will be a further slide towards chaos. Mr Osmund goes on to give some practical suggestions as to how leadership and authority can be exercised in schools and he is hard-headed enough to acknowledge that this will mean sometimes setting up situations where the power-proportions are altered in favour of the staff. He is right in suggesting that teachers have more power than perhaps they realise, and if they are prepared to use it with flexibility and discrimination (and with ingenuity as he points out) there may well be the 'renewal of confidence' he looks for in our secondary schools. The problem is that too much discussion about education is conducted in tones of rather facile optimism. Mr Osmund strikes a note which is pertinent and practical; it is essential that discipline and authority are talked about and talked about realistically. We owe that much to the young teachers coming into the large comprehensives where life can never be easy.

Yours faithfully,

R. F. J. NICHOLSON
Deputy Headmaster
Sheraton Comprehensive School

The Open University,
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes.

Dear Sir,

I welcomed your raising the issue of the provision by the Open University of a Foundation Course in Educational Studies (TRENDS 'Talking Point' 1975/3).

The non-provision of such a course up to the present time is the result of historical circumstances. The Faculty of Educational Studies came into being following the report of a sub-committee of the Planning Committee. The sub-committee had been established to consider the contribution which the University could make to teacher education. With this conception it is not surprising that the recommendation establishing the Faculty also indicated that a Foundation Course was not required — since teachers would have had their educational studies foundations laid previously and elsewhere.

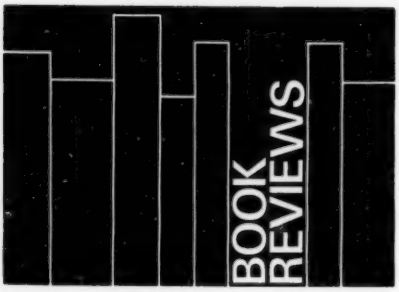
Some of us have become increasingly aware that this argument ignores at least two features. One is that teachers may need their foundations renewing on educational studies just as they apparently need them renewing in Science, Arts and other areas of knowledge which the University provides. The second feature, and for me the more important, is that the 'openness' of the University provides a rare opportunity in this country for the extended study of education by persons who are other than education professionals.

I am especially grateful that, following the publication of your 'Talking Points' article, you, sir, helped the University's representative Advisory Committee on Studies in Education consider the issue. The general support which that Committee gave to the introduction of a Foundation Course in Educational Studies has now led the University to consider the matter further within a working group expressly established to review the provision of foundation and first year studies.

What the eventual outcome will be I cannot at this stage foresee; but I wanted you to know that your initiative had already helped to secure movement.

Yours faithfully,

WALTER JAMES
Dean
Faculty of Educational Studies



Training for adult education
K. T. Elsdon
University of Nottingham (in association with the National Institute of Adult Education) £1·75

All who are concerned with the education of adults in any form will be grateful for this publication. Over the last ten years we have become increasingly and uneasily aware of numerous significant additions, here and overseas, to the branches of knowledge and expertise which relate to the techniques of teaching adults and to training teachers of adults — advances in academic research and in recorded field work and experimental projects. We are aware, too, that these advances involve some radical restatements of the function of adult education, and of the personal and social ethic incumbent upon its workers. For example, from a Dutch source, we learn fortuitously that 'andragogy' is to be replaced as a term by 'andragology' — which is defined as 'the science of planned change in and with adults'.

Our knowledge of these developments has been scrappy and contingent upon chance references, contacts and the limited circulation of neo-styled papers. Those responsible for this volume have enabled Mr Elsdon to update us with a comprehensive compendium and a first-rate bibliography, giving us a sound datum-line for policy-making. This alone would meet a crying need. We have here, however, no mere catalogue or reference book. It is a scholarly appraisal by an eminent expert, not only of particular techniques but of general trends and their rationale, together with courageously committed guide-lines for the future. The language, in spite of the exigencies of dense factual compression, is terse and lucid, at times barbed or humorous, and always readable.

Much in this book will be of great use in other countries, and occasionally one regrets that the material is so closely interwoven with our domestic structures and idiom — 'R.B.', 'Centre Head', 'HMI', and so on. But this is not a work of pure educational theory but a book about real tasks in an actual society.

One hears today the rather noisy assertion that teaching adults is so identifiable with processes of personal and social change that the teacher needs an ideology and a dynamic rather than a transmissible body of skill and knowledge, and that 'training' implies hierarchy, qualifications and other abominations. I welcome Mr Elsdon's book as, in itself, a refutation of this point of view which is prejudicial to any broad-front advance in adult education.

J. A. SIMPSON

The reliability of examinations at 16+
Schools Council Research Studies
Alan S. Willmott and Desmond L. Nuttall
Macmillan Education £4·65

So the present public examinations at 16-plus are pretty reliable (despite the headlines that followed the publication of this slim book) though perhaps underserving of their reputation for infallibility. It is several years since Dr John Valentine in a paper delivered in this country described the award of grades to candidates at A-level as akin to 'Russian roulette'; it is not so long since, in the course of discussions over the possible introduction of a new grading system at A-level, the proposal to include on the candidate's certificate a statement of the likely range of error was opposed on the grounds that it

would destroy the public confidence in the examination.

In this highly technical and closely reasoned study, Willmott and Nuttall tell us just how much one can really expect in the way of accuracy from CSE and GCE examinations. The answer they come up with is that on a five-point scale a candidate's real grade is likely to be within limits of plus/minus one grade of his declared grade. No very firm discrimination one might think, but perhaps as much as the user has any right to expect or any real need to know!

Of the three classical ways of testing reliability, the authors adopt that testing for internal consistency — the degree to which each question in a paper measures the same attributes as the whole. The case for regarding this as a sound measure of reliability, which is crucial to the argument of the book, is discussed fully and the method applied separately to CSE and GCE examinations in a number of subjects.

In the course of pursuing their main theme, the authors indulge in two to three interesting reflections: it would appear that examinations depending mainly on essay type questions are not very different in reliability from those that use predominantly short answer techniques; profile reporting is liable to lead to far lower levels of reliability than a global score; not only do component parts of an examination correlate fairly reliably with the whole, but candidates' performance in individual subjects correlates highly with their overall examination performance. The latter suggests that what examinations are assessing may be less the candidate's achievement in a series of subjects than a general factor composed of general ability, level of application, persistence and examination techniques. All of which gives ground for further thought.

A stimulating book. No doubt prescribed reading for all concerned with examination administration; and a demanding but rewarding book for a statistical layman like the reviewer.

B. W. KAY

The Victorian school manager
Peter Gordon
Woburn Press £6·00

English elementary schools in the nineteenth century were provided and run by managers and trustees; it made no difference whether they were clerical or lay, they saw themselves as the entrepreneurs, the teachers as the operatives, and the children as raw materials, sometimes hard to come by. Managers found the money, found the teachers and on some occasions the pupils. 'I am obliged to bribe the parents to send their children, which many of them are by no means disposed to do', wrote the Reverend Mr Wood of Wheatley. This is one of the essential elements in the history of our public education and, until Dr Gordon's book appeared, far too little work had been done to indicate its significance.

Dr Gordon's work on this theme has been exceptionally thorough and attentive to an enormous range and variety of sources. He has amassed information on an awe-inspiring scale but has still managed to control all this evidence so that the adviser and the administrator as well as the historian can profit from reading his book.

Several of the issues with which he deals are once again topical. Parents as managers, for instance, were favoured by HMI the Reverend Dr Temple as far back as 1861, but condemned by the Bishop of Birmingham who noted the absence of parental representation in the management of Eton, Rugby and Harrow. There is a contemporary ring to the anguished rhetorical question of an experienced member of the London School Board who wrote in 1910, 'Is it right to get elected to a public body, and when elected to work in the interests of some other outside interest?'.

Dr Gordon concludes by observing that the absence of uniformity and of definition of function caused persistent difficulties for school managers. Ignorant of their powers and duties, managers received little guidance from the Education Department. With the report of the Taylor Committee now awaited, this guidance may at long last be forthcoming.

For its scholarship and its readability this book must be warmly welcomed.

D. M. HOPKINSON

Effective questioning: self-instructional micro-teaching course for in-service and trainee teachers

Guild Sound and Vision Ltd., Woodston House, Oundle Road, Peterborough PE2 9P2 Teacher's handbook £3·00. Coordinator's guide £2·50. Evaluation manual £2·50.

This course has been developed from a research project directed by Professor Elizabeth Perrott at Lancaster University. It began in 1973 as the United Kingdom contribution to an international project initiated by OECD. The original material on which it is based were from the Far Western Laboratory which produced a mini-course, 'Effective Questioning', for the American market. Extensive field trials in Lancashire and modifications to the original based on these have produced a package of three handbooks, an introductory video-tape or film, and four more video-tapes or films illustrating model lessons. The course requires fifteen hours to complete.

The course introduces nine skills graded for complexity which are considered necessary for the effective questioning of pupils. Three bad teaching habits are shown: repeating one's own question, answering one's own question, and repeating a pupil's answer. The tapes are easily followed once the student has assimilated the sequence of presentation, and the model teachers who present the skills avoid the woodenness that television frequently induces in the non-professional. This helps students to relate successfully to the models, but even more important is their capacity to form deeper insights into the art of framing questions from the study programme.

The teacher's handbook contains the meat of the course and offers good and bad examples of the skills under consideration together with self evaluation exercises designed to reinforce the new skills. The coordinator's guide contains sound practical advice for those wishing to organize a micro-teaching course and covers such essentials as the setting up of equipment, phasing the instructional components, and suitable follow up activities designed to encourage the continuing practice of the skills in the classroom. An evaluation manual is provided to assist those who would like to test the results of the course in their own situation.

This handbook contains the results of the Lancaster Unit's evaluation programme in which twenty-five teachers assisting with the research were given tests designed to measure their scores on twelve skills immediately before the course began, after the course, and four months later in their own schools. Using the mean scores, nine of the twelve skills showed improvements that were either statistically significant or were thought by the research team to have shown substantial improvements. Scores recorded immediately after the course were maintained, with some regressions, four months later in the school. The results obtained suggest that there was a substantial amount of transfer between skills learnt in a laboratory setting and the classroom milieu, but it is an unfortunate omission from an otherwise rigorous piece of research not to include the levels of significance to provide the reader with some measure of the degree of confidence with which improvements were accepted.

The behaviourist perspective, fundamental to the micro-teaching model,

and its assumption that teaching can be reduced to a standard model, will not suit all palates; some may regard it as a technique which prevents students from developing a fuller response to the complex pattern of classroom behaviour. But the method makes no greater claim than that of providing identification and practice of some professional skills in a controlled setting. With some success, judged by the results of this research, it creates a framework for the practice of certain important teaching skills with the additional feature of providing swift and adequate feedback on the student's performance; a prerequisite to successful learning.

Micro-teaching has become the noisy baby of the teacher training world. Further discussion about its merit or demerit as a system seems to be less important than decisions about where it can be most effectively incorporated into the training period — initial or in-service? Its potential for the effective management of learning situations in open-plan schools and the teaching of critical concepts in the secondary school curriculum has yet to be explored.

P. J. SILVESTER

Child study and guidance in schools
A. W. Bolger
Constable £5·00
The teacher and counselling
Douglas H. Hamblin
Basil Blackwell £4·00

In *Child Study and Guidance in Schools*, A. W. Bolger spends ten chapters describing meethods of studying intellectual, physical, social, and personality development, to provide a basis for the remaining four on interviewing, and helping children with problems.

The selection of techniques he commends to teachers is often questionable, sometimes inappropriate and occasionally inexplicable (the sole photograph in the book is of the family relations test material). The chapter on anecdotal records is welcome, but there is no justification for reproducing an extended example which reads more like a rejected Crossroads script than a valuable exercise in observation. The detail of some of the questionnaires and behaviour rating schedules (a powerful turn-off for many teachers) is in sharp contrast to the often sketchy references to several important techniques and tests. One feels like an unsatisfied observer rather than a participant in the guidance process.

In *The Teacher and Counselling*, Douglas Hamblin, by contrast, devotes the whole of his book to an exposition of counselling alone, and makes a thorough job of it. Greater length (despite lower price) naturally gives greater scope, but Hamblin also uses it well, getting the reader right into the counselling situation so that you begin to feel what is going on as well as knowing about it. The arrangement of chapters is exemplary — each one headed by a series of questions which the author really does tackle, and rounded off by a summary which he recommends you to read first — and the topics they cover are well chosen.

Hamblin includes a glossary of disappointing triviality (eg self-image: the picture held by a person of himself) and Mr Bolger's appendices reproduce school record forms, rating schedules, a modification of Kephart's Perceptual Survey Rating Scale, and a classified list of tests. Both have useful bibliographies.

G. CRANMER

Authority and organization in the secondary school
Elizabeth Richardson
Macmillan £2·25

The author worked for three and a half years as consultant to the headmaster and staff of an expanding comprehensive school in Nailsea. During this time the school underwent important changes in its management structure. It moved from traditional subject departments to broader curri-

cular departments, from a house systen to a year system, and explored the possibility of bringing academic and pastoral organizations more closely together. The book argues that the successful implementation of such changes must be preceded by, and linked with, an examination of staff relationships and of staff attitudes to authority and responsibility within the school.

This is a welcome book for two reasons. First, its documentation of the managerial problems of educational change fills an important gap. Second, it offers some valuable insights into the methods of school-based in-service training which are likely to assume growing importance at a time when the hopes of regular and substantial in-service training for all teachers raised by the James Report and the 1972 White Paper are fading away.

It is more difficult to assess the relevance of the Nailsea experience for other secondary schools. The earlier parts of the book describe a preoccupation with pupil power and 'the revolt of the young' which cannot claim general validity in 1976. But the author's comments on the dangers of separating academic and pastoral concerns should be read by every secondary school teacher. She describes how the processes of reorganization and expansion often lead to structural divisions between curricular and pastoral organizations, 'a division which is threatening to destroy the integrity of the teacher's task and to fragment the leadership roles of the headmaster and his senior colleagues'. And again: 'Thus we create an unnatural opposition between intellect and emotion, between education and therapy, between teaching and counselling . . . when the whole basis of our educational system could be strengthened immeasurably if we could discover just how, in each of these pairs of apparent opposites, one is really contained in the other'.

M. HART

The chance of a lifetime—a study of boarding education
Royston Lambert
Weidenfeld and Nicholson £7·00

Objective sociological studies do not normally produce beneficial results before they are even completed, nor startling conversions in the personal lives of the sociologists who conduct them. Yet the discovery by Dr Royston Lambert and his team that previous literature virtually equated boarding with the boys' 'prep' and public school system, and his decision to bring together for the first time representatives of the innumerable different varieties of boarding school that actually exist, led to the formation in 1966 of the Boarding Schools' Association. This is probably the most broadly-based educational association in the country in the variety of schools and staff (both teachers and others) that it brings together.

Dr Lambert's interest in a subject which was new to him led to his becoming, from 1968 to 1973, headmaster of a famous independent 'progressive' school, Dartington Hall. Thus this book is quite different from what it would have been if it had been published in 1968 at the end of the commissioned research from which it arose. Dr Lambert has had to test his theoretical conclusions in the light of personal responsibility for the educational experience of individual teachers and pupils with whom he was in daily contact.

The consequent enrichment of the book has made it well worth waiting for. It should be compulsory reading for anyone with responsibility for boarding education. Anyone involved in education will find it interesting, and indeed entertaining. It is a scholarly work with extensive notes, appendices and a bibliography for those who need to go deeply into the subject; but the main text is eminently readable and is enlivened throughout with illustrative examples.

There are some findings that may

surprise the reader. The completely haphazard arrangement of boarding education in Britain, where 3·5 per cent of secondary children attend boarding schools, contrasts with the carefully planned situation in Russia, where, in the ten years from 1956 to 1966, the boarding population was raised from 56,000 to 900,000; and with Israel, where as many as 15 per cent of secondary children are at boarding schools.

Boarding schools tend to be much more extreme about everything, good or bad. Their students are much keener on attainment in creative arts than those in otherwise similar day schools. Although boarding schools generally claim that they increase children's independence, some day-school children, especially as they get older, in fact exercise a very much greater independence. Ironically, boarding schools have closer contact with pupils' families than do day schools.*

The maintained boarding schools, being more need-oriented, emphasize the individual more than the independent schools. They also find innovation relatively easy, not having organized old scholars or staff hierarchies resistant to change. On the other hand, it may be a weakness that in maintained schools as few as 5 per cent of the residential staff have previous experience in boarding schools, in contrast with 85 per cent in the independent sector.

Two missed opportunities are revealed; surprisingly little use is made of boarding as a means of altering the curriculum, which remains virtually identical to that in a day school; big day schools with small boarding houses almost never use these to give opportunity for short-term boarding to the many boys and girls who would gain from this. One quarter of all boarders are assisted as being in need. A survey showed 12 per cent of parents saying they would want boarding if funds permitted, and this would mean more than doubling the present boarding population.

'The LEAs still have responsibility for children who need to live away from home. Few at present face this responsibility seriously and there is now overwhelming evidence that there are far more such children . . . than are being provided for'. Dr Lambert goes on to say that the majority of those children who are supported by LEAs are placed in independent schools which in many cases are not best able to help them; and that an expansion of facilities for limited-term boarding attached to maintained comprehensive day schools is likely to be the best and least costly solution.

J. OUNSTED

* The reviewer suspects this may no longer be true since the recent explosion of 'pastoral care' in day schools — but the message is still worth remembering.

The behavioural strategy of teachers in Britain and the United States
H. A. G. Paisey
National Foundation for Educational Research £4·95

Paisey's research investigates the reaction of pupils to different types of teacher behaviour and the effects of these on pupil performance and morale. The method adopted has been widely used in the USA, data being derived from pupil comment on teachers. This technique may reflect a proper concern for the views of the consumer. However, the needs of the research consumer also deserve consideration.

The research induces a state of perceptual indigestion as the argument can only be followed by sustained discrimination between PPH, PRH, PRL and other similarly labelled categories. The reader needs to be persistent. Although I do not question Paisey's definition of behavioural categories, I feel that some simple modification in coding these would be helpful. Research is unlikely to be read, much less have an impact or influence decisions, if one must grope past con-

fusion and irritation towards understanding.

The research draws an analogy between managerial and teaching systems; teaching behaviour is classified according to concern for product, the concern for personnel (pupils), or both. The results seem to indicate that the higher and more equal teacher behaviour is on both dimensions, the better the response and performance of the pupils. Paisey argues for a strategy which 'successfully comprehends both (product and personnel) at similar high levels of intensity'. One queries whether the managerial model is consistently followed, for example a Mouton grid analysis would recognize high intensity on both dimensions as unrealistic. Effective management would seem to relate more to appropriate and adaptive behaviour to meet changing demands. There also seems to be insufficient recognition of ways in which the introduction of changes in the total organizational climate can modify behaviour.

S. GRACEY

Social influences on educational attainment
Torsten Husen
OECD/CERI £3·20

In this revised version of the 1972 book, the author begins by discussing the notion of equality as an objective of educational and social policy. Is equality to be viewed 'as a starting point, as a treatment, as a final goal or as a combination of these three?' In what amounts to a panoramic survey of recent work in this field, Husen refers to J. S. Coleman's '*Equal Schools or Equal Students*' (1966) which argues that what matters most to the student is 'not how equal his school is but rather whether he is equipped at the end of school to compete on an equal basis with others, whatever his social origins'; to the 'redemption theory' developed by John Rawls and later challenged by Frankel and Bell; and again to Coleman's work (1973) where it is concluded that 'a society cannot make an implementable decision to create equal opportunity for all children within it. What it must do instead is to decide what level of public resources and what imbalance of public resources it should invest to reduce the level of inequality that arises from private resources'.

There is a useful discussion of the changing conception of educational equality, and the author distinguishes three social philosophies and conceptions — the conservative, the liberal and the 'redemptive'. In the first, Husen sets out the Black Paper arguments, and in the second he refers to both the Douglas and the Plowden Reports. Under the redemptive conception, Bernstein's work on language competence (shades of Bullock!) is referred to as well as Bloom's reanalysis of the field in 1964.

In a later section, the author deals with the attack by Jenks and his associates at Harvard on the belief in the importance of IQ and schooling for occupational success. Husen confesses however that 'it is difficult to avoid an impression of confusion . . . whether or not IQ and formal schooling make any difference in adult career'. The issue of possible overemphasis on verbal intelligence brings a much more positive conclusion. After discussing the work of Holland, Nichols and Astin on 'loss of talent', Husen quotes the Russian picture to make his point: 'Those who are able to make socially recognized careers in fields such as art and athletics are rare exceptions. Even in the Soviet Union, a young person who sets out to become an engineer by getting into a good Institute of Technology has a much greater likelihood of success than the one who wants to become a professional ballet dancer'.

This is a well-documented and comprehensive review.

R. NICHOLLS

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